

Connecticut YMCA-School Partnership Program:

A CDC-Funded Communities Putting Prevention to
Work Initiative of the Connecticut Department of
Public Health

May 17, 2012



Connecticut YMCA-School Partnership Program

**A COMMUNITIES PUTTING PREVENTION TO WORK
INITIATIVE OF THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH**

MAY 17, 2012

Prepared for:

Connecticut Department of Public Health
Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Program
410 Capitol Avenue, MS #11 HLS
PO Box 340308
Hartford, CT 06134-0308

Prepared by:

Melissa Chapman Haynes, Ph.D.
Traci Capesius, M.P.H.
Anne Betzner, Ph.D.
Professional Data Analysts, Inc.
219 Main Street SE, Suite 302
Minneapolis, MN 55414



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction.....	8
Description of the YMCA-School Partnership Initiative	9
Description of the External Evaluation	10
Methodology	11
Report Organization	14
Results	15
1. How did each YMCA utilize CPPW funds to implement physical activity programming? What types of activities were implemented	15
2. How did each Local Policy Team function and what is their role moving forward (if any)?.....	19
3. On average, how much time did participating youth spend on physical activities during participation in the project?	20
4. What were the successes of the participating YMCAs?	22
5. To what extent are the YMCA programs sustainable, and how do programs plan to sustain activities in their respective communities?	31
6. How many YMCAs have sustainable policies, systems, or environmental changes?	31
Key Lessons Learned	34
Discussion	42
Recommendations.....	43
Appendix A: A CPPW Grantee Success Story.....	44
Wallingford Family YMCA & Dag Hammarskjold and Moran Middle School Partnership	44
Participant Success Story: Morgan, age 13, female (Wallingford YMCA Fit-to-Go Program).....	54
Appendix B: Program Reach.....	57
Appendix C: Staffing Outputs—CPPW Funded & In-Kind	59
Appendix D: CT DPH Quarterly Report Template	60
Appendix E: PDA Interview Protocol for YMCA Interviews	61

Executive Summary

Overview

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) awarded Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) funds to eleven YMCAs to implement physical activity and nutrition programming in partnership with one or more schools. YMCAs either built on activities, resources, and partnerships already in place or opted to build new partnerships and implement new programming.

Each of the eleven projects had the freedom to make decisions about the type of physical activity programming provided, who and how to partner with schools and other organizations, and how to target students who qualify for free or reduced lunch (an indicator of lower family socioeconomic status). Projects were implemented between January and December 2011.

Professional Data Analysts, Inc. (PDA) was contracted by CT DPH to conduct an external process and outcomes evaluation, which began in early June 2011. Six evaluation questions were developed to guide evaluation activities. To examine the evaluation questions, the evaluation team reviewed quarterly reports submitted by each YMCA, conducted semi-structured interviews with each YMCA Program Coordinator or Executive Director, and conducted one in-depth interview with staff from one school-YMCA partnership.

Key Findings

How did each YMCA utilize CPPW funds to implement physical activity programming? What types of activities were implemented?

- Six YMCAs worked with middle school grades (5th-8th grade or 6th-8th grade), three YMCAs worked with elementary-age students, and two worked with high school students.
- While all 11 YMCAs partnered with at least one local school, five YMCAs collaborated with two or more local schools and one YMCA collaborated with all middle schools in the city—for a total of 16 partner schools.
- Five of the YMCA-School collaborations involved new partnerships, formed in response to CPPW grant funding, and six collaborations were in existence *prior* to the current CPPW initiative and were expanded upon to implement CPPW programming
- Program structures varied from less structured (providing YMCA memberships and having staff available to check in and motivate youth) to fairly structured (students participated at designated times for specific activities).
- Physical activities varied by YMCA-School partnership (swimming, basketball, dance, tennis, Zumba, yoga, and Wii games or competitions) and were flexible to student's interests.

On average, how much time did participating youth spend on physical activities during participation in the project?

- During the 12-month period of program implementation, YMCA-School partner programs served 1,425, the majority of whom (74%) were from families with low socio-economic status. This represents approximately 13% of students in all grade levels of the 16 partner schools and 24% of students at these schools that qualify for free or reduced lunch.
- YMCAs provided around 2 hours per day of physical activity programming (range: 45 minutes to 3.5 hours/day). Programming was offered on different days of the week and different times of the year.
- Students attended an average of 8.2 times per month (range: 4-14 times/mo.) and, on average, participated in an average of 15.4-19.1 hours of physical activity programming per month.

How did each Local Policy Team function? What is their role moving forward (if any)?

- The primary focus of Local Policy Teams was to plan, implement, and oversee CPPW programming.
- Five Policy Teams constituted new collaborations and the remaining six leveraged existing alliances of community members. Previously established Policy Teams were also involved with implementing additional community initiatives.
- Policy teams that were in place prior to CPPW funding, and whose scope is broader than the CPPW project are most likely to continue collaborative efforts in the future and have the capacity to continue leveraging additional resources to continue physical activity and nutrition efforts.

What were the successes of the participating YMCAs?

- YMCAs were able to establish or strengthen local partnerships with schools and other community planning entities.
- YMCA programs utilized well-trained, committed staff members that were able to keep youth engaged in programming.
- Programming was flexible and responsive to youth and community feedback which, in turn, helped keep youth engaged.
- YMCAs reported short-term improvements in youth attitudes, behaviors and self-esteem and increased family engagement.
- Some YMCAs implemented successful use of systems, policy and environmental change initiatives utilizing community partnerships.

To what extent are the YMCA programs sustainable, and how do programs plan to sustain activities in their respective communities? How many YMCAs have sustainable policies, systems, or environmental changes?

- YMCAs were able to work toward sustainable obesity prevention programming through establishing new or strengthening existing partnerships with schools, establishing partnerships with local community policy and planning entities, making improvements to programming infrastructure, utilizing feedback and evaluation results, as well as increasing community awareness of the need for obesity prevention efforts.
- The most successful YMCA-School partnerships had a combination of strong community partners, clear planning, provided flexible programming based on community and evaluative feedback, employed well-trained and effective program staff, and leveraged additional funding sources.
- Partnerships that utilized multiple funding streams to provide programming and were able to leverage additional funding streams before the end of grant period are in a better position to sustain obesity prevention efforts.
- While all YMCAs were able to establish stronger partnerships with schools, five of the eleven YMCA-school partnerships have been able to create additional sustainable partnerships, infrastructure, and programming or obesity prevention-related change that will continue into the future.

Lessons learned

- Clear planning from the outset of a project that addresses potential barriers to youth participation in programming is critical.
- Partnerships are essential to survival as is effective communication between partners.
- Creating a positive association with the program is important to getting youth to participate in programming.
- Providing flexible programming keeps youth engaged.
- Creating systems change policy to provide youth with transportation to programs helps reduce barriers to participation.
- Programming cannot be continued at the same level (as provided during the CPPW funding period) if additional funding sources are not leveraged before the end of the grant period.

Recommendations

- For funding streams with short time frames, select grantees with established community collaborations, existing program infrastructure, and that have additional sources of program funding.

- Outcome data collection (e.g. to gauge changes in behavior or physical activity) should be conducted in a standardized manner, using valid instruments across sites by trained data collectors (not program staff). Relatedly, if outcomes are not achievable or measureable within the funding period, utilize alternate sources of documentation of progress made toward outcomes.
- Produce a guide or other resource on best practices to foster sustainable programming for childhood obesity programs for use by organizations such as the YMCA, as well as their partners.

Introduction

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) received a Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Over the course of two years, CT DPH collaborated with key partners, primarily the Statewide Alliance of YMCAs and the Connecticut Statewide Pioneering Healthier Communities (PHC) initiative, to award funds to twelve YMCAs across the state. The purpose of these funds was to foster connections between YMCAs and schools and community partners to implement opportunities to increase access to safe, structured and affordable activities for youth in the community. The primary target for programs was youth from families with low socio-economic status (i.e. students who qualify for free or reduced lunch at school). The secondary target was all students in the partner schools.

Ultimately, 11 YMCAs participated in this CPPW-funded project¹. Seven of the 11 participating YMCAs were also involved in the PHC initiative, including: Bridgeport, Greater Hartford, Greater Waterbury, New Haven, Plainville, Southington, and Wallingford. Figure 1 provides a graphic depiction of the approximate geographic location, in Connecticut, of the 11 participating YMCAs.

Figure 1. Location of YMCAs participating in the CT DPH CPPW YMCA-School Partnership Program



¹ A twelfth YMCA was to participate, but as there were so few students who qualified for free or reduced lunch at the partnering school, this YMCA ultimately did not participate in the program.

Description of the YMCA-School Partnership Initiative

The overall project goal for the YMCAs that received funds from the CPPW project was:

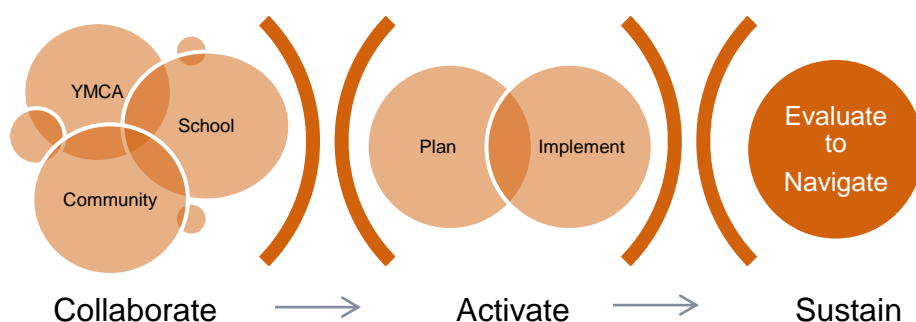
To increase healthy lifestyles for youth through physical activity and nutrition.

Each YMCA approached this goal differently. While some YMCAs built on activities, resources, and partnerships already in place at the YMCA, others opted to build new partnerships or to implement a new activity or program.

The overall model for each YMCA is illustrated in Figure 2. Initially, all YMCAs were required to create or build on a partnership to facilitate **collaboration** with a school, and some also had community-based partners. Local Policy teams were developed for the purpose of the CPPW project, or existing community policy/organizing entities were utilized. Local Policy Team membership varied; some teams consisted of individuals from the participating YMCA and the targeted school, while other teams included diverse groups of ten or more community representatives.

The goal of each Policy Team was to plan CPPW programming and to oversee implementation. Typically, individuals at the YMCA and/or the school implemented, or **activated**, the program, and Local Policy Teams were updated on the project process. Finally, each partnership was to evaluate their activities in an effort to work toward **sustainability** and expand on CPPW project activities.

Figure 2. Process of partnership and programming for the YMCA CPPW projects



Two annual, CT DPH-funded statewide symposia were organized and conducted to educate and mobilize participants to develop action plans and to advocate for policy, system, and environmental change-success. The first symposium was conducted in the summer of 2010 and the second in the summer of 2011².

² A survey of participants' experiences was collected at each symposium; these results can be obtained from the CT DPH and were only reviewed by the external evaluator to provide additional context for the evaluation.

Description of the External Evaluation

Professional Data Analysts, Inc. (PDA) was contracted by the CT DPH to conduct an external process and outcome evaluation. The external evaluation team collaborated with CT DPH to identify six evaluation questions that guided evaluation activities. These questions are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Evaluation Questions

1. *How did each YMCA utilize CPPW funds to implement physical activity programming? What types of activities were implemented?*
2. *How did each Local Policy Team function and what is their role moving forward (if any)?*
3. *On average, how much time did participating youth spend on physical activities during participation of the project?*
4. *What were the successes of the participating YMCAs?*
5. *To what extent are the YMCA programs sustainable, and how do programs plan to sustain activities in their respective communities?*
6. *How many YMCAs have sustainable policies, systems, or environmental changes?*

Process-Oriented Focus

While the chosen evaluation questions include both outcome- and process-oriented questions, due to the newness of these initiatives and the short time frame for planning, implementation and evaluation, it was necessarily determined that the primary focus of the evaluation would be on answering process-oriented evaluation questions (e.g. how each program was implemented that included both success and challenges).

Preliminary Examination of Early Outcomes

Some early outcomes were examined, such as improvements in physical activity levels of students and efforts made toward sustainability of programming, policy, systems or environmental changes. Anecdotal evidence and success stories regarding students' level of physical activity were collected. Youth physical fitness data was collected by project staff and is only reported here for the case study site (Wallingford YMCA) as data for most sites was not sufficient to report these outcomes. Further, the evaluation examined what systems or environmental changes were in place to sustain the program activities.

Primary stakeholders for the evaluation include CT DPH, participating YMCAs, and other YMCAs and their potential partners who may be interested in forming similar partnerships and in implementing analogous programming.

Methodology

To examine the process and outcome evaluation questions, the evaluation team implemented three evaluation activities:

- Review of standardized quarterly report data submitted by YMCAs;
- Semi-structured interviews with YMCA Program Coordinators; and,
- A case study of a successful YMCA-School partnership.

The process evaluation questions were addressed via all three evaluation activities; the outcome evaluation questions were primarily examined in the YMCA interviews and the case study of one particularly successful partnership and program. Each of the evaluation activities is described in further detail in the following sections. PDA triangulated data from each of these sources in an attempt to create an accurate picture of grantee program activities and outcomes.

Quarterly reports

The purpose of the quarterly reports was to collect information about program outputs, as well as some open-ended information on successes, challenges, and plans for sustainability. The CT DPH developed a report template that each YMCA completed on a quarterly basis. The data requested via these quarterly reports included:

- **Basic program information**, such as the school name, grade levels served, dates and hours of programming;
- **Number of students involved**, as well as the number of students who qualified for free or reduced lunch and the average number of times a student participated in the program each month;
- **Staff hours** dedicated to the program, including paid positions and in-kind contributions; and,
- A **summary of activities** for the quarter.

The first quarterly report covered program activities that occurred between January 1 and March 31, 2011. PDA reviewed the submissions for the first two quarterly reports and suggested report improvements to CT DPH on August 3, 2011. Suggestions for change included the elimination of potentially redundant information (e.g., grade levels served usually did not change over time), formatting suggestions, definitions for what it means to be a “new” or a “participating” student, and suggestions for revisions to the language of the open-ended items to improve the quality of the responses. Ultimately, these changes were not incorporated into subsequent quarterly reports.

PDA was able to incorporate data from three quarters of reports into this evaluation report, for activities spanning January 1, 2011 through September 30, 2011. Since the report for the fourth quarter was due to CT DPH too late for PDA to incorporate into this evaluation report, PDA provided the YMCAs the opportunity to review and submit updates to the summary tables in this report.

Given that data from YMCAs was not standardized the data from quarterly reports was challenging for evaluation purposes. Information from the YMCA interviews (described next) was used to obtain further clarity regarding data and open-ended responses provided in the quarterly reports. PDA also provided each YMCA an opportunity to review the summary tables in the report which served as an additional accuracy check. Additionally, Barbara Moore from the Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs and leaders from the CT DPH conducted site visits and were able to review and provide clarification when there were discrepancies in quarterly report data.

To analyze data, the external evaluation team created summary tables and calculated response frequencies and averages as appropriate. Open-ended items and interview responses were used to provide additional context and fill in information gaps.

YMCA Interviews

The purpose of the YMCA interviews was to gather detailed information about program activities, as well as to collect rich, detailed information on successes, challenges, lessons learned, and plans for sustainability. PDA collaborated with CT DPH and Barbara Moore from the Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs to create a face sheet that described the purpose, intended uses and users, and topic areas for the interviews. Once this was found to meet the need of all three parties, PDA created an interview protocol, which was finalized by CT DPH.

The interview questions focused on the following content areas:

- Initial capacity and motivation to participate in the CPPW program
- Description of the program
 - Which students participated and how were they recruited
 - Description of program activities
 - Collaboration with community members or other organizations in the community
 - Role of the Local Policy Team
- Lessons Learned
- Successes/ Challenges

The Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs helped to coordinate the introduction of the evaluation team to the individual YMCAs. PDA finalized interview times and then provided each YMCA with a brief, written overview of the topic areas and interview format. Interviews were conducted with all 11 YMCAs; five were conducted during the summer months and six were conducted in the fall and early winter of 2011. All YMCAs had an opportunity to review the interview summary in December 2011 to provide feedback or changes, and all feedback was incorporated. Interviews lasted between 20 and 45 minutes, with most interviews lasting approximately 30-35 minutes.

Each interview was recorded with the permission of the YMCA. These recordings were transcribed and then summarized by the evaluation team. Each YMCA received a copy of the interview summary to review for accuracy, and all edits suggested by the individual YMCAs were incorporated. PDA then conducted a thematic analysis across the YMCA summaries.

Case Study: Successful Collaboration

PDA worked with CT DPH the Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs to identify one YMCA-School partnership that was particularly successful. Success was defined as having implemented a physical activity program in collaboration with a school partner (in this case two school partners) and having implemented a system for collecting selected student outcomes. Further, the chosen partnership had established plans to sustain activities beyond the CPPW grant period. While a few other YMCA-School partnerships were considered, it was ultimately determined that the partnership of the Wallingford YMCA-Moran and Dag Middle Schools was one of the most successful, and these partners subsequently agreed to participate in the case study.

Additional information for this site, including existing pre-post physical activity data from female participants at Moran Middle School and an illustrative story of an individual student's success was collected. PDA also conducted an interview with a guidance counselor at one of the collaborating middle schools.

Limitations

This report is based on data that is observational and, therefore, firm conclusions cannot be made between programming outputs and short or long-term outcomes. Additionally, data (qualitative and quantitative) primarily represent the perspective of participating YMCAs and not their school partners or other community collaborators, so likely presents an incomplete picture of programming successes, challenges and lessons learned. Further, the quantity and quality of data provided by grantees, coupled with the short funding period, pose challenges to establishing solid conclusions regarding the success and sustainability of these programs. Nonetheless, the evaluation results offer several positive and useful lessons for people working to establish or improve partnerships between community programs and K-12 schools. Therefore, we encourage sharing of these lessons, to the extent appropriate, given the limited scope of this evaluation.

Report Organization

Evaluation results are presented by evaluation question (1-6). Every attempt was made to answer each evaluation question as thoroughly as possible given available data. The report then provides a summary of key lessons learned across projects with examples from select YMCA-School partnerships. Several appendices follow the body of the report, including the Wallingford YMCA-Moran and Dag Middle School partnership success story, an individual participant success story and additional anecdotal successes, estimated and projected short and long-term program reach of the CPPW-funded YMCA-School partnership initiative, estimated staffing outputs (grant-funded and in-kind), as well as tools used for data collection.

Results

Evaluation results are organized by evaluation question (1-6). Every effort was made to fully answer each evaluation question, given available data.

1. How did each YMCA utilize CPPW funds to implement physical activity programming? What types of activities were implemented?

Of the 11 YMCA projects, six of the programs focused on middle school grades, two YMCAs focused on elementary-age students, one focused on elementary and middle school grades, and two focused on high school students. All 11 YMCAs partnered with at least one local school; five YMCAs partnered with two or more local schools and the Waterbury YMCA partnered with all middle schools in the city of Waterbury. Five of these YMCA-School partnerships were new, formed as part of the CPPW program. The remaining six partnerships were in existence prior to CPPW funding (namely via PHC funding); these relationships were built upon and/or expanded to implement CPPW programming. All YMCA-School programming included a physical activity component and some also included a nutrition-related element. Additionally, while some YMCAs branded their program with a name (e.g. “Smart Moves”) others were labeled by activity type (e.g. “swim”). A detailed summary of these YMCA-School partnerships are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. YMCA- School Partnership Details

YMCA name	Partner school name	Grades	Program Name	Partnership History
Branford - The Soundview Family YMCA	Walsh Intermediate School ³	5, 6	Smart Moves Program	CPPW
Bridgeport YMCA	Dunbar Elementary/Middle School (1 school)	K – 8	PA and nutrition programming	Pre-CPPW
Danbury - Regional YMCA of Western CT	Ellsworth Elementary School	1 – 3	SCRAM	CPPW
Hartford - YMCA of Greater Hartford	Hartford Public High	10 – 12	PA, tracking of PA, nutrition	CPPW
Milford - Woodruff Family YMCA	Platt Technical High School	9 – 12	Jump Start Fit Program	Pre-CPPW

³ Early in the grant this YMCA collaborated with Branford High School, grades 9-12, to implement zumba and kickboxing. Since the focus for the majority of the CPPW project was on the collaboration with Walsh Intermediate School, the rest of the Branford results focus on the work done with grades 5 and 6.

New Haven - Central CT Coast YMCA	Roberto Clemente & St. Martin Academy	5 – 8	Swim, basketball	CPPW
Plainville - Wheeler Regional Family YMCA	Middle School of Plainville	5 – 8	PA component added to ASP	Pre-CPPW
Southington / Cheshire Community YMCA	DePaolo & Kennedy Middle Schools	6 – 8	Teens on the Go	Pre-CPPW
Torrington - Northwest CT YMCA	Vogel Wetmore School	2 – 5	PA supplement to Power Hour ASP	CPPW
Wallingford Family YMCA	Moran and Dag Middle Schools	6 – 8	Fit To Go Program	Pre-CPPW
Waterbury - Greater Waterbury YMCA	Middle Schools in Waterbury (3 schools)	6 – 8	Youth and Teen Wellness Center	Pre-CPPW

Student Recruitment Strategies

The goal of each program was to recruit students who qualified for free or reduced lunch, which was used as an indicator of family socio-economic status. Most projects, however, opened activities to all interested students. Some programs targeted students who were inactive or who were otherwise not connected to after-school programs (ASP). A brief summary of how students were recruited for each program is provided by partnership:

- **Branford** – The school nurse identified at-risk students, but all students were notified of the program and could participate if interested.
- **Bridgeport** – The program was open to all students at the school (all qualify for free/reduced lunch). The YMCA worked with the school to inform students of the program.
- **Danbury** – All youth in grades 1-3 who were enrolled in the school's extended learning program (school-year and summer) were part of the program. Most qualify for free/reduced lunch.
- **Hartford** – All students in the school's nursing academy were invited to participate. The YMCA worked with the school to inform students of the program.
- **Milford** – The school identified students who were not involved in extracurricular activities; students were targeted for low levels of physical activity as well as self-esteem.
- **New Haven** – The YMCA worked with two schools to provide transportation to the YMCA. All students were invited to participate.
- **Plainville** – The YMCA built on their existing partnership with the middle school; a scholarship program already existed at the YMCA, so any family that showed a need could be part of the scholarship program and could take part in programming.

- **Southington** – The YMCA worked with the school to identify students who qualified for free/reduced lunch. These students received a letter from the guidance counselor. They did not want the kids to be labeled, so efforts were made not to promote it more broadly.
- **Torrington** – The program was open to all students at the school (most qualify for F/R lunch). The YMCA worked with the physical education teacher at the school to inform students of the program. Program enrollment was first-come, first-serve, as the program reached capacity within days of when recruitment began.
- **Wallingford** – The YMCA worked with the school to identify any student who was inactive for any reason (e.g. not just obese or overweight). Interested students also needed to sign a commitment letter.
- **Waterbury** – This program was communicated primarily through word of mouth between the youth. In addition, the Supervisor of Health and Physical Education for the City of Waterbury worked with school physical education teachers to identify youth.

Programming Provided to Youth

A brief summary of each of these programs provides insight into activities provided to youth participating in these programs.

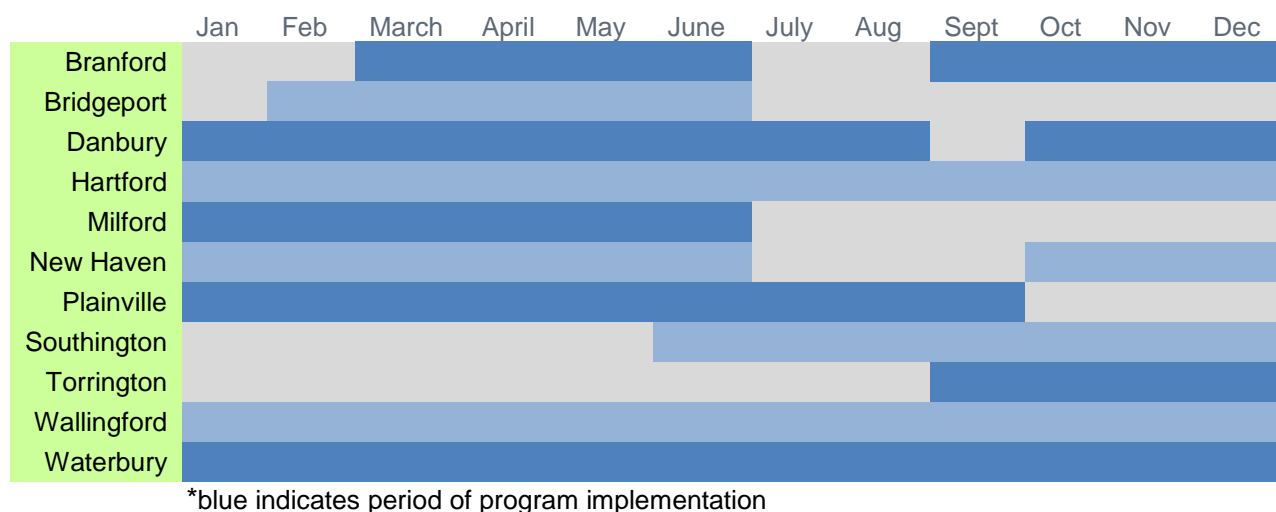
- **Branford** - “Smart Moves” is an eight-week program that provides one hour of physical activity and one hour of nutrition programming each week. Youth receive related homework assignments, such as showing their families how to use equipment at the YMCA. Families are also provided with a three-month membership to the YMCA.
- **Bridgeport** - During the school year, students utilize YMCA resources every day of the week (instead of only 1-2 days a week). A more varied array of activities is provided to students, including a Frisbee toss, swimming lessons, golf, tennis, an obstacle course, dance, and basketball. In the summer, the YMCA partners with the local health department to continue activities, including teaching the kids Beyoncé’s “Let’s Move” dance, which was then taught to attendees of family day.
- **Danbury** - The “Students Can Run and Move” (S.C.R.A.M.) school year program includes sports activities, dance groups, and cooking classes after school. The YMCA also collaborates with the school to help provide an extended summer afternoon program that focuses on physical activity and nutrition and includes field trips to a local farmer’s market.
- **Hartford** -The YMCA partnered with the nursing academy high school to provide students in that academy with a 12-month membership to the YMCA as well as individualized attention to monitor progress toward healthier lifestyles. Students keep a personal nutrition and physical activity journal to track their progress.

- **Milford** -In the “Jump Start Fit Program” students attend four 2-hour sessions which introduce them to the YMCA’s facilities and programs. If students attend these four sessions, they receive a free six-month YMCA membership to facilitate their interest and participation in physically activity.
- **New Haven** -The YMCA partnered with two schools to provide transportation and access to YMCA facilities. Their objective is to initiate engagement by youth in physical activities such as swimming and basketball and then to expand this engagement to other activities and opportunities at the YMCA.
- **Plainville** - The YMCA expanded an existing partnership with an afterschool program at the Middle School of Plainville to include physical activity components into the daily afterschool program. Activities included a Wii dance party, snowshoeing, tag games, soccer, and football.
- **Southington** - The “Teens on the Go Program” provides students with YMCA memberships so they can use YMCA facilities at any time. There is also a structured program provided in the afternoon hours, approximately 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm, where YMCA staff is available to provide a healthy snack, to provide Zumba and Pilates classes.
- **Torrington** -This program operates in collaboration with an afterschool academic program called “Power Hours.” When youth first arrive to the program they run around the playground and the number of steps they take is recorded via pedometers. Students are then split into three groups, by age. One group stays at the school engaged in team activities, another group swims, and the third group takes part in fitness-orientated activities in the YMCA gymnasium. All students work toward completion of the “Kids Marathon,” progress toward which is tracked throughout programming with pedometers.
- **Wallingford** - The “Fit-to-Go Program” is a 12-week program where students visit the YMCA twice a week from 2:30 pm until 5:30/6:00 pm. Students focus on nutrition by making a healthy snack and then work with personal trainers to complete and track their physical activity. Field trips are also periodically incorporated. Right before graduation, there is a family night where a nutritious dinner is provided and highlights of the program are shared. Students receive a free three-month family YMCA membership at graduation. A policy has been established with the school to provide transportation to the YMCA.
- **Waterbury** - This YMCA collaborated with the City of Waterbury, all middle schools in the city, and other community partners to increase access to YMCA facilities. Youth are provided with a YMCA membership. This partnership also used CPPW funds to leverage other resources to continue expanding YMCA access and other programming opportunities in the city.

As displayed in Figure 3, eight YMCA-School partnerships implemented programming in either January or February 2011, one started in March 2011, and one started in June 2011. Six provided programming during the summer months, seven provided programming during the fall semester 2011 and three

provided programming January through December 2011. For example, the Hartford YMCA offered students 12-month memberships, so their programming spanned the entire time period.

Figure 3. Timeline of program implementation, January through December 2011



2. How did each Local Policy Team function and what is their role moving forward (if any)?

Local Policy Teams were either developed in response to CPPW funding or an existing team was utilized to help carry forward CPPW program goals. All Policy Teams were charged with reviewing CPPW programming plans and supporting and providing oversight to CPPW programming after implementation. The function of each of Policy Team is summarized below.

The primary focus of the following five Policy Teams was to plan, implement and oversee CPPW programming and constituted new community collaborations.

- **Branford** –Policy Team members include representatives from the partner school, YMCA, Yale, and the East Shore Health Department. The focus is on implementing CPPW programming in partnership with Walsh Intermediate School. The team also plans to help secure funding to expand the program in the future.
- **Bridgeport** –Policy Team members include the YMCA Executive Director, school principal, After school Program (ASP) coordinator, and a nurse practitioner from Optimus Healthcare.
- **Hartford** –Policy Team members include the YMCA CEO, the director of the school nursing program, and other YMCA staff.

- **Milford** –Policy Team members consist mostly of YMCA staff and volunteers.
- **New Haven** –Policy Team members consist of YMCA staff, as well as a representative from each of the two partnering schools.

The remaining six YMCA-School partnerships leveraged existing alliances of community members to establish their CPPW Policy Teams. While these six Policy Teams worked to plan, implement and oversee CPPW programming, they were also involved with implementing other community initiatives. The origin of these Policy Teams is described below.

- **Danbury** – This project utilized an existing local community team, the *Coalition for Healthy Kids*, to help plan, implement and evaluate CPPW programming. Previous work conducted by this Coalition in 2009 led to identifying needs that were met with CPPW programming. In the future, their role will be to help expand the SCRAM program.
- **Plainville** – The Policy Team, assembled previously under a PHC grant, was tapped to help guide CPPW programming.
- **Southington** – The Policy Team is called *Activate Southington* and was originally assembled as part of a PHC grant.
- **Torrington** – The Policy Team was a spin-off of an existing policy team established under a different funding stream.
- **Wallingford** – The Policy Team, called *Activate Wallingford*, was initially assembled as part of a PHC grant and was leveraged to work to support CPPW programming.
- **Waterbury** – The membership of the CPPW Policy Team includes YMCA and school partners as well as members of the City of Waterbury Policy Team. The Policy Team works on CPPW programming as well as the Safe Routes to School program. During the funding period, this Team was able to leverage additional city, state and federal funding for additional policy, systems and environmental change efforts in their community.

In general, Policy Teams that were already in existence prior to this project and whose purpose is broader than the programming implemented under this CPPW initiative are the most likely to continue collaborative efforts in the future.

3. On average, how much time did participating youth spend on physical activities during participation in the project?

The data available to describe the extent to which students participated in physical activity include the number of participating youth, YMCA memberships provided, the available programming hours per day, and the average number of hours of participation per student per month. As shown in Table 3 below, the 11 YMCA-School partnership programs served a total of 1,425 participants, 74% (n=1,058) of which

qualified for free or reduced lunch⁴. Participation differed by program from a low of 22 youth to a high of 300 youth. Across 10 CPPW-funded programs⁵, students attended an average of 8.2 times per month (range: 4-14 times/mo.).

Additionally, on average, YMCAs provided around 2 hours per day of physical activity programming (range: from 45 minutes to 3.5 hours/day). Programming was offered on different days of the week and different times of the year (previously illustrated in Figure 3). Students participated in an average of 15.4-19.1 hours of physical activity programming per month across 10 programs⁶.

Table 3. Program characteristics, number of program participants and approximate average hours per student per programming month

YMCA	Grades	YMCA Membership Provided (yes/no)	Total # participants	Avg. times/mo. per student	Available program hours/day	Approx. avg hrs per student/mo
Branford	5, 6	Yes, 3-month	46	4	2	8
Bridgeport	K – 8	No	130	9	1.25	11.25
Danbury	1 – 3	No	54 (Jan-June 11) 220 (Summer 11) 120 (Oct-Dec 11)	14	.75	10.5
Hartford	10 – 12	Yes, 12-month	22	9	2	18
Milford	9 – 12	Yes, 6-month	32	6	1.5	9
New Haven	5 – 8	None needed for open swim	174	7	1.5-3.5	10.5-24.5
Plainville	5 – 8	Yes, 3-month	125	13	2.5-4	32.5-52
Southington	6 – 8	Yes, 3+ months	32	8	3	24
Torrington	2 – 5	No	60	NA	NA	NA
Wallingford	6 – 8	Yes, 6-month	110	8	2.75	22
Waterbury	6 – 8	Yes, 3-month	300	4	2-3	8-12
Total students served = 1,425				Avg. = 8.2 times/mo.	Avg. = 1.9-2.4 hrs. programming	Avg. = 15.4-19.1hrs/mo. per

⁴ Additional calculations regarding the short-term and projected long-term reach of these programs are provided in Appendix B of this report.

⁵ Data needed to calculate average times per month was not available for one YMCA program.

⁶ Data needed to calculate average times per month was not available for one YMCA program.

		/day	student
--	--	------	---------

4. What were the successes of the participating YMCAs?

There were six major categories of successes reported across the 11 YMCA-School projects that received CPPW funds. The self-reported descriptions of project success were gathered through interviews with YMCA project staff or the Executive Director of the YMCA. Table 4 displays each of these categories, as well as the number of projects that reported each area of success. The subsections following the table provide additional detail about each success area, and examples are provided from individual YMCA projects.

Table 4. Successes of the CPPW projects and frequency of occurrence

Success Area	Number of Projects
• Established or strengthened local partnerships	9
• Well-trained, engaged and trusted program staff	7
• Short-term improvements in youth attitudes and behaviors	7
• Increased family engagement	6
• Provision of responsive programming	6
• Student self-esteem and leadership opportunities	4

Established or Strengthened Local Partnerships

A frequently cited area of success is the formation or expansion of partnerships between YMCAs and schools as well as other community-based organizations or partners. Some of the non-school community partners included youth coalitions, organizations such as the “Kids Marathon,” individuals in city government, or other community partners. These partnerships are described in more detail below, by program.

Bridgeport - The activities of the Bridgeport YMCA-school partnership were funded with a combination of CPPW and other funds. In addition to partnering with two schools, the Bridgeport YMCA partnered with a local health department and local community organizations. One project these partners worked on together was the creation of community garden beds. Other partners included a Junior Tennis Organization which helped provide equipment that allowed YMCA staff that had experience teaching tennis to be able to provide lessons. Additionally, a partnership with Optimus Health Care, a local primary care organization, provided a nurse practitioner to work with the YMCA.

According to the Bridgeport YMCA, partnerships forged under the CPPW initiative have helped benefit children in the community, as illustrated by the following statement:

I think everyone has had their voice heard, and I think that's important. It's not just one person's idea, everyone is able to express their opinion and somehow be

able to talk about the different ideas and why they may or may not work. And being open about the community and what we can do together as a group for the benefit of the children.

Lastly, there are volunteers that help implement program activities, including parents and high school students. It was noted that there are typically many adults present during programming which helps keep the staff-to-child ratio no higher than 1-to-10.

Danbury – Under the auspices of CPPW funding, the Danbury YMCA has been able to establish new partnerships with local schools. According to YMCA staff:

*Obviously we work with a lot of kids, so we have a facility that does preschool education, we have school-age before and after-school care, we also have an escape to the arts that targets at-risk middle school kids, and we have four camps over the summer. One of the camps serves 300 kids over the summer, with 90 scholarships...so there is a lot going on all the time with youth, **but the CPPW project was a direct attempt to go into the school and really affect physical activity.** With the barriers we identified, many of these kids wouldn't be able to come to us, so by going into the schools we reached a number of kids that otherwise would not be able to come into our facility.*

The Danbury YMCA worked with the local “Coalition for Healthy Kids” to conduct CPPW activities. Working on the CPPW initiative, particularly completing the CDC Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity (CDC DNPAO) needs assessment, helped this group to narrow its focus, develop programming and related activities. The more they worked on this initiative, the more community partners they were able to interest and engage. “It started small but as we have more success, people want to be part of that success.” CPPW funds helped act as a catalyst to the work of the Coalition, helped make physical activity programming possible between the YMCA and its partner schools, and helped leverage additional funding sources. The importance of collaboration is illustrated in the following statement from a YMCA staff member:

The reason we're seeing success is because we have a lot of community partners who are willing to work together. And we would have not received ACHIEVE funding without that. None of this could have happened if we didn't collaborate. Same with the SCRAM program. The Y is putting in resources and doing a lot of the implementation piece of it, but getting to that point wouldn't have happened if we didn't collaborate.

Southington – The primary partnership for this project was between the Southington YMCA and two middle schools. The YMCA was able to build on an existing relationship with the schools to implement CPPW programming. Partnering included communication between the YMCA and the schools as

needed: “having a good relationship, we were able to talk to the schools and say, ‘hey do you have any magical solutions to help us out here?’ The school has been really positive.”

The Southington YMCA was able to build upon work and partnerships that had been started during a Pioneering Healthier Communities (PHC) grant initiative, where they reportedly had already “made some great inroads” into the community. Community members are starting to recognize the work of the “Activate Southington” partnership in their community.

Additionally, the Southington YMCA was able to use its existing working relationship with the local board of education to partner with the school and to ultimately recruit students to the program. Since there is representation from the local board of education on the “Activate Southington” council, the school board was already familiar with the “Teens on the Go” program that was funded under the CPPW project, and “it was pretty easy to leverage that relationship to get connected with the kids who qualified for this program.”

Torrington – The Torrington YMCA established two primary partners under the CPPW initiative – the Vogel Wetmore Elementary School and the “Kids Marathon” organization. The “Kids Marathon” organization donated Kids Marathon-branded materials, such as t-shirts and medals for the kids as well as a book (items that organizations would typically have to purchase).

The YMCA’s school partner allowed them to use facilities and equipment at the school and, in turn, the YMCA provided the students with access to their gymnasium and resources. Additionally, the YMCA stated that an advantage of working with the school was the close proximity between the two: “It’s nice for our first time [partnering], to get our feet wet with this program and having the school right across the street from the YMCA [is beneficial].”

Waterbury – The Waterbury YMCA emphasized the need to help community members understand why physical activity, nutrition and obesity prevention are important to their community—this is an essential piece in moving them to an understanding of why collaboration and partnership on these issues is important. The CPPW initiative also helped further establish partnerships and encouraged resource sharing, as illustrated below:

...and the CPPW grant helped to get people around the table. It allowed people to get around the table and share resources. And I was able to talk about the Safe Routes to School program from my experiences – and that might not have happened if we had not sat down to talk about sharing resources.

Additionally, as stated earlier, as a result of these partnerships, the community was able to leverage additional city, state and federal funding for additional policy, systems and environmental change efforts in their community.

Well-Trained, Engaged and Trusted Program Staff

A second area of success, as reported by seven YMCA-School partnerships, was the use of key program staff to implement CPPW programs. Most of these staff members were reported to be individuals at the YMCA. Some examples are provided for select partnerships.

Bridgeport – A critical component of this program’s success was program staff. Project staff – including the Program Coordinator, the leader of the cooking class, and other physical activity staff – meets together to plan and implement programming. Further, the existing relationships staff have with the youth in their community, as well as the high rates of retention for staff involved in the CPPW program, has reportedly been essential. This is exemplified in the statement below by a YMCA staff member:

Children know and trust the staff that have been part of our program. So it’s nice they don’t have to acclimate to all new staff. In the East End, it is like a box – people don’t really travel outside of their area to get services. So they go to what they know, and they get services from the people that they know. So because of that, we have to get individuals who participate – so it’s important they trust us. And they are better at receiving what we have to offer them.

Hartford – An essential asset to the Hartford YMCA partnership is the dedicated YMCA staff member who works with the students. When students arrive at the program they check with this staff member, get their journals, then this YMCA staff member puts each student on a schedule for the day to make sure they are getting a half hour of cardio and a half hour of strength training. This staff member is the “lead relationship-builder” with the youth. They serve as a personal coach who motivates the students. Students are provided with a lot of personal attention which helps them focus on goals, facilitating their continued engagement in the program.

New Haven – The majority of New Haven YMCA staff have been provided with additional training in working with youth (trained by the Youth Development Training Resource Center (YDTRC)), to prepare them to work with youth in the CPPW program. As the YMCA Executive Director stated, “when I came to this youth center I didn’t feel like my staff was trained enough, so the majority of staff went through this 30-hour training about how you work with kids. Still, if I have staff and the YDTRC program has a training opportunity in the city, I send additional staff there...so they really understand what it’s like to work with youth.”

Plainville – A key asset to the Plainville YMCA-School partnership program is their after-school coordinator. As the YMCA Executive Director reported: “[she] is a great program person and so the kids are always having fun. And she has a really good staff. You can’t help but have fun with her.”

Southington – Southington YMCA staff noted that the role of YMCA staff on this project is to be “more than just meet and greet, it is to make the kids feel valued and connected.” This program also has a key staff member that is important to the program’s success: “we have a pied piper... she is just full of energy, so I think a large part of the success was her, and she just believes in the program.” This YMCA staff member runs the program (as well as other programs at the YMCA), and works with the youth not

only on physical activity, but also on building self-esteem and feeling good about being part of a group. As a YMCA staff member stated:

The kids really look forward to hanging out with [her]. I don't know if they would be able to articulate that, but you can see them light up when they get here. And I think that it's done in a fun way, and the schedule is not so rigid. So it's flexible enough that the kids can vary the activities and they don't have to do things on a schedule.

Waterbury – The Waterbury YMCA program benefits from staff that know all of youth and that interact and motivate them, as illustrated by the following statement by a YMCA staff person:

I've been doing this a very long time, and the biggest disappointment in the area of teens is when they've been coming for a while and then something happens with their little clique and they stop coming. As youth workers, we have to identify that and try to get them to keep on coming. And it's usually nothing to do with the facility, but that's the nature of middle and high school students. So I'll be walking across the green, and I see [a youth] who I haven't seen at the Y for a while. And I say, "I haven't seen you at the Y for awhile, why?" And he says, "well [his friend] hasn't been going." I wish the kids would take the initiative on their own, but we need to identify and keep up communication with them.

All of the YMCA staff in Waterbury complete the "40 developmental assets" (Search Institute⁷). The idea behind the 40 assets is that the more assets kids have, the more likely they are to be successful. Each year part of staff training includes the importance of being a positive role model for youth. There is a lot of staff education around these assets as well as on how to communicate with youth. Through this training, the YMCA also helps prepare staff to handle difficult and potentially dangerous situations.

Short-term Improvements in Youth Attitudes and Behaviors

The third area of success, as reported by seven of the YMCA-School partnerships, involves short-term improvements in student attitudes towards physical activity, nutrition, or wellness and related behaviors. Although no standardized data about attitudes, behaviors or health outcomes were collected across all projects, some YMCAs collected BMI or fitness test data, two collected survey data, and most collected informal (anecdotal) data about changes experienced by interacting with youth and their families. Some examples of changes in attitudes, behaviors, or health measures reported by selected YMCA programs are presented below.

⁷ <http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets/lists>

Branford - The Health and Wellness Director at the Branford YMCA reported that the program “has been great, just in the year we’ve been running our program. It’s been growing.” In addition to getting feedback from participating youth, the YMCA collects and looks at quantitative information, such as data from a lifestyle questionnaire that students and their families each take during the first week of the program and then again at week eight. The questionnaire provides a score of the youth’s (and parent’s) lifestyle habits at the beginning of the program, and then the changes that have been made at the end of eight weeks. This questionnaire is part of the “Smart Moves” curriculum. The YMCA also records the student’s BMI at the beginning and end of the program. During the last session, all but one of the student’s BMIs dropped by the end of the eight-week program. “And the change we see from beginning to end is really remarkable. *We’ll try to teach them lifestyle-changing activities and choices that they can maintain.*”

Additionally, the YMCA program attempts to connect program activities to applications in the school environment or in the afterschool environment to inform youth’s nutritional choices. For example, youth are often home by themselves due to their parent’s work schedules, so the program tries to educate youth about making healthy food choices:

None of this is about putting these kids on a diet or telling them what they can or cannot eat. But what I want them to take out of this is when they go home, or go grocery shopping, or eat lunch at school or somewhere else that they know the better choices and know how to make the better choices. And we’ve really found from the numbers we get at the end that even in the eight weeks alone, they really are starting to make better choices and that it is working.

Bridgeport – An overall success of the Bridgeport YMCA-School partnership program, as expressed by the YMCA’s Executive Director was: *“Seeing students love for exercise. And seeing them do physical activity because it is fun – seeing that they are enjoying it, and not running because they have to. And we are making an impact on generations to come.”*

Danbury – One of the focuses of the Danbury YMCAs program was on skills like crab walks, bear crawl and activities that would build up youth’s core muscles. Many youth couldn’t do these activities at the beginning of the program, but assessments conducted by YMCA staff indicated youth showed improvements in these activity areas. This was especially true for youth who were able to participate in the entire 24 weeks of the program: *“those kids showed dramatic improvement in their core skills, and their ability to hold the plank, do a push up, do a sit up, sit and reach.”*

Hartford – The greatest success for the Hartford YMCA is that more students are now working out at the YMCA facility. Some youth have made changes to their eating habits and have developed commitments to exercise regularly. One student reportedly motivated the rest of her family to exercise and sign up for a family membership at the YMCA. According to the YMCA: “It’s more than a program, plus students can get PE credits at the school– those were the two bright spots for us.”

Milford – The Milford YMCA reported that the students in the program have a great time and have learned valuable skills: “they were enthusiastic and they enjoyed the pool. We taught two kids how to swim – they didn’t know how to swim and were afraid of the water. And we taught them to be comfortable in the water and how to exercise in the water.”

Engagement of Families

A fourth area of success, reported by six of the YMCA projects, was the engagement of families through the CPPW programs. Two YMCAs reported that they provided family memberships so that students have opportunities to engage in physical activity with their families. Some YMCAs have family nights, a family day, or have simply made it a priority to form relationships with parents. Some examples are provided below.

Branford - To expand on their current program offerings, the Branford YMCA offers students and their families free, three-month memberships to the YMCA as part of the CPPW project. The idea behind this strategy is that youth can come in with their families and take advantage of what they have been learning in the program. The YMCA hopes that the youth share what they’ve learned with their families and get their families actively involved in healthy lifestyle changes. The YMCA reports that they see many of the youth’s families coming in to the YMCA to take advantage of the various programs, use the gym, take gymnastics classes or swim lessons, or take part in other activities. A YMCA staff member expressed: *“We want their entire family to get in here – mom, dad, brothers and sisters – we want them all to be able to be here. And you know it’s great, they bring their parents, they bring their brothers and sisters and work along with them, which is fantastic.”*

The Branford YMCA reported the biggest overall success of the program was to see the genuine changes in the children, as well as to see and to hear the feedback from their parents.

Our program ended two weeks ago and I still have parents that I bump into in the hallway who are picking their kids up or doing other things here – they thank me so much and tell me how much their child learned and loved the program. I had a mom just yesterday that said her son came home and she was putting sugar in her coffee, and her son asked her whether she really needed to put that much sugar in her coffee. These kids really hear what we are saying and really understand and believe in it – that is really amazing.

Danbury – The Danbury YMCA partnered with Ellsworth School to provide six parent programs. On back-to-school night they worked with the Hispanic center to make sure that materials were translated (one side English one side Spanish), and recruited volunteer translators on any evening there was a parent program to help communicate with the parents. There was also a family cooking night with a 30-minute healthy meal cooking demonstration. A local doctor was employed to promote, in English and Spanish, the “5-2-1-none” message (five fruits and vegetables, limit TV/media to two hours a day, one hour of PA,

and no sugary beverages). There was also a summer safety program where YMCA educators spoke about foot and bike safety. Childcare was offered so that parents could come and bring their kids. YMCA instructors volunteered in the evening to provide child care and keep the kids active in the gym so that the parents could fully participate.

Waterbury – The Waterbury YMCA discussed the importance of integrating parents into the planning process as well as program implementation. There are currently two parents on the committee, and YMCA staff also tries to integrate parents as volunteers. YMCA staff stated:

It's very tough in the makeup of our society to expect parents to volunteer 3 or 4 or 5 hours a week. You've got to make sure it's quick, that there are resources provided like childcare with food, and understand that the demographics of an urban environment – single moms, single dads, grandparents taking care of multiple kids – you need to make it as easy as possible when you are trying to get them to the table.

Provision of Responsive Programming

The fifth area of success, as reported by six of the YMCA-School projects, was the habit of reflecting on the implementation of program activities, and making changes as was appropriate or necessary. For example, one YMCA conducted surveys with program participants. Another YMCA found that their original plan for the project was not feasible, and so they worked with the school to find a more feasible plan. Examples are provided below for selected partnerships.

Branford – Before implementing the “Smart Moves” curriculum with CPPW funding, the Branford YMCA had been using the “Traffic Light Program.” The YMCA Health and Wellness Director realized the materials for “Traffic Light” were very outdated, so she looked for a program that was more current. After they found the curriculum for “Smart Moves,” YMCA staff met with the author and her team; the YMCA really liked the curriculum and decided to adopt it. “We are much happier with this program. So we run the same style as we did. The only difference is the curriculum book – but we still run the program in the same style.”

Bridgeport – The Bridgeport YMCA found that it was necessary to be flexible. They would advise other YMCAs who were interested in conducting a similar program to: *“Be flexible! Adjust to the needs of the school and the feedback of the community and parents.”*

Torrington – The Torrington YMCA noted that it is important to discuss ways to measure program success before program implementation. To this end, the YMCA measured success toward reaching goals of the “Kids Marathon” by providing youth with pedometers and recording the number of steps each child has taken at the end of each class. Steps are counted while running around the playground as well as during other program activities: “So we’re relating that [number of steps] to distance. So, in

addition to the run around the playground, we have ... [how much] they moved ...so we are using that to total up to the 26.2 miles.” They also hope that their efforts will help more students pass their school’s fitness tests, as illustrated by the quote below:

...the state of CT has a PA assessment that the kids do and they report what percentage of the kids can complete them. And so our school district is down like 38% or 28% and the average is about 50%. So we wanted to make sure we included the four tests that they do – one is push-ups, there is curl-ups, there is sit and reach and then there’s the mile run, so that’s why we selected the running and kid’s marathon concept. So our hope is that these kids, when they take that test that they will all pass it.

Wallingford – Wallingford YMCA program staff conducts surveys and periodically reflects on how to improve their youth programming. YMCA staff reported that they are willing to be flexible with their programming, as necessary: “If we see something that doesn’t work, we will switch it up a bit.”



Waterbury – The Waterbury YMCA tries to align some program activities, such as swimming and basketball, with data the schools collect to help measure changes in physical fitness.

Student Self-Esteem and Leadership

The sixth area of success, as reported by four of the YMCA projects, was the effect of programming on student’s self-esteem and opportunities to build leadership skills. Some pertinent examples are provided below.

Danbury – Part of the Danbury YMCA-Ellsworth School partnership involved implementing field trips to a local farmer’s market. YMCA staff volunteered their time to walk the children to the farmer’s market on Fridays, as described below:

...the kids got \$10 in coins – they were wooden coins and I would exchange them from Danbury City Center, Farmer’s Market organizers. The instructors would help children, but the kids really made all the fruit and vegetable decisions and exchanged the money. They loved it! They had to decide, “what am I going to buy for my family this week?” They felt so empowered with that.

And by the third time around –the children started to compare prices, and began to demonstrate how much produce they could get with their wooden coins, it was really just fantastic. And it was just so much fun to do.

YMCA instructors also conducted nutrition activities every Wednesday with the youth. Prior to the first trip to the farmer's market, they had a fruit and vegetable tasting so the kids would know what the fruits and vegetables tasted like. This was then followed by a "mock" farmer's market in the cafeteria so the children could practice and get a feel for what it would be like to attend and buy food at a real farmer's market. On each of the field trips, the children wore pedometers, walked a mile, and received water bottles and shopping bags to carry their produce purchases. Following the field trips, the kids drew what they bought and program staff took many photographs.

Waterbury – The Waterbury YMCA partnership provides particular program activities that they know will get youth in the door. Once youth at the facility, they take the opportunity to engage youth in other activities and leadership opportunities:

Unfortunately many of the kids in Waterbury think they are going to be an NBA star. The reality is that we need to guide them and let them know that education is also important and that there are also other opportunities. But basketball is going to get them in here. Once we get them in here then we have the opportunity to move them on to other things, like the fitness center and the pool, as well as the leadership opportunities – like the youth and government and leaders club – for these kids to also get involved in community service and other things. So we want to get them through the door and then there are other opportunities for them as well.

5. To what extent are the YMCA programs sustainable, and how do programs plan to sustain activities in their respective communities?

6. How many YMCAs have sustainable policies, systems, or environmental changes?⁸

YMCAs were able to work toward sustainable obesity prevention programming through: establishing new or strengthening existing partnerships with schools, establishing partnerships with local community policy and planning entities, making improvements to programming infrastructure, utilizing feedback and evaluation results, as well as increasing community awareness of the need for obesity prevention

⁸ Evaluation questions five and six are addressed together to reduce redundancy, as responses to these two questions are similar.

efforts. As many of these concepts have been described in previous sections of this report (e.g. under “successes”), each is briefly summarized below.

All 11 YMCA programs were able to establish new partnerships or were able to strengthen existing partnerships with one or more schools. Due to these new or expanded partnerships, several YMCAs are contributing to school physical activity assessment testing either through assistance with data collection and/or helping youth build their physical activity skills so they can pass statewide fitness tests. Some youth are also able to meet their school’s physical education requirements through participating in YMCA programming. Additionally, YMCAs and schools within each partnership are trying to find ways to continue collaborating on obesity prevention efforts.

Most YMCAs were also able to establish or strengthen partnerships with local community policy or planning entities, to work on CPPW program planning, implementation and evaluation. For some YMCA-School partnerships, this has led to additional funding for obesity prevention efforts. The projects that leveraged existing policy teams that were already focused on obesity prevention or related health efforts appear to be the most likely to continue partnering in the future and to continue programming (in one form or another). For example, the Waterbury YMCA and the existing Policy Team were able to combine efforts and use CPPW funding to successfully leverage additional funding for policy, environmental and systems change efforts around obesity prevention. While the YMCA noted that they might still need to leverage additional funding to continue physical activity and nutrition programming, as was provided under CPPW funding, they will still be working on obesity prevention efforts. These sentiments are illustrated in the following statement by Waterbury YMCA staff:

Don’t look at the dollar amounts. I’d love to get more money from the CPPW grant, but you’ve got to look at the long-term. And bringing policy people around a table could have a huge impact in your community. So they may make all the excuses in the world – not enough money, not enough time, etc. – but if we are going to make these huge cultural changes and impacts in our communities someone has got to do it and it’s not about the money. And I understand there are some YMCAs who are struggling, but you’ve got to take a step back, because I think you will see the dividends in the long-term.

A Waterbury YMCA staff member also added, *“It was interesting to me that CPPW was one grant; however, it connects to a bunch of other opportunities and other resources and things we were able to leverage because of this initiative.”*

Several YMCAs were also able to improve program infrastructure either through obtaining new equipment, new program curricula or through training of YMCA staff. For example, the Branford YMCA was able to purchase a new, updated physical activity and nutrition curricula, (“Smart Moves”) that it will be able to use with youth in the future. The Bridgeport YMCA was able to leverage tennis equipment from a local organization which allowed staff members that were already trained to teach tennis to teach interested youth. Further, the Waterbury YMCA sent all of their youth workers to training on the Search Institute’s “40 Developmental Assets” for youth which helped prepare staff to work with youth

and the majority of New Haven YMCA staff members were trained by the Youth Development Training Resource Center (YDTRC), to prepare them to work with youth in the CPPW program. Additionally, all YMCA staff involved with CPPW programming gained new experiences with successful strategies for engaging kids and promoting good nutrition.

Most YMCAs also reported gaining additional experience with gathering data and community feedback which they used to make program improvements. Several YMCAs noted that it was important to continually reflect on programming in order to keep “it fresh” for youth and to keep them engaged. These evaluative skills appear to have strengthened over the course of CPPW programming for several grantees and will likely be useful to them in evaluating future programming and other obesity prevention efforts.

Further, all YMCA-School partnership programs likely resulted in raised awareness of community partners and stakeholders (including youth and their families) regarding the importance of obesity prevention efforts in their communities. Awareness was likely raised through activities such as recruitment and engagement of Local Policy Team members in CPPW program planning and implementation, family resource events as well as youth that took part in programming. Additionally, while solid data regarding improvements in youth’s levels of physical activity and other healthy behaviors were not available for this report, anecdotal evidence suggests that at least some youth involved in programming were able to take what they learned during programming and apply it in different settings as well as engage their families in conversations about these topics and even help motivate their families to become more physically active.

Several YMCAs and their partners have been able to leverage additional resources and funding to continue working toward obesity prevention in some capacity. For example, the Danbury and Waterbury YMCA partnerships were able to leverage ACHIEVE funding to improve policy, systems and environmental changes for obesity prevention. This funding will help them maintain programming and partnerships that could potentially lead to additional resources down the road. While many YMCA programs would like to continue physical activity and nutrition programming akin to what they have provided under CPPW funding, they report the need to seek additional funding sources to cover hard costs such as staff time, transportation and memberships. This suggests that few, if any, of the YMCA programs will be able to continue the full program as implemented under the CPPW initiative, without some additional funds.

Overall, given the scope of funding provided by CT DPH for these initiatives and the short period of time for program implementation, five of the eleven YMCA-school partnerships have been able to create some form of sustainable partnerships, infrastructure, programming or obesity prevention-related change that will continue into the future.

Key Lessons Learned

There were seven major categories of lessons learned reported across the 11 YMCA-School partnerships that received CPPW funds. Table 5 displays each of these categories, as well as the number of projects whose responses fit into each thematic area. The most frequently reported lesson learned was related to partnerships being essential to survival, as five of the 11 YMCAs reported this as a lesson learned. This was also the most frequently cited area of success, so partnerships emerged as a key factor for success, growth and sustainability. The subsections following the table provide additional detail about each lesson learned, and examples are provided from individual YMCA projects.

Table 5. Lessons Learned from CPPW Project Implementation and Frequency of Responses

Thematic areas – lessons learned	Number of Projects
Partnerships are essential to survival	5
Sustainability without consistent funding is difficult	4
Provide flexible programming	3
Effective communication is important	3
Create a positive association with the program	3
Planning is a key to success	3
Providing transportation helps reduce barriers to participation	3

Partnerships are Essential to Survival

Danbury – The Danbury YMCA discussed the importance of establishing buy-in and working together with community partners on health promotion.

I do think the model of the CPPW project does work because it asks you to get your community partners before you do anything. Today you cannot be a self-contained organization and say I'm going to do all of this stuff – you don't have the capacity to do it, you don't have the money to do it. So I think the partnerships are key to any sort of health change you are trying to make. And if you are not doing that, you are not going to be successful because you need the buy-in for these things to work.

Plainville – This CPPW program benefited from being able to build upon an existing relationship, and a strong established afterschool program. “The actual program they run through the middle school is a well-oiled machine so my advice is to partner with someone like that!”

Hartford – The Hartford YMCA characterized the CPPW project as a “win-win-win” – for the school, for the community, and for the YMCA. If there is funding that can be used to “subsidize the memberships and stimulate youth into a health and wellness routine, I just think it's good for everyone. So I think it's simple – if you break it down into its simplest terms it is something we already do but it's doing it in a more deliberate way with a specific age group.” The YMCA reported they would “absolutely” participate

in this type of a project again. They plan to explore how similar programming can be continued with Hartford High School in the future.

Waterbury – The Waterbury YMCA was successful in bringing together key stakeholders and then having this key stakeholder group utilize the CPPW funds to leverage additional grants. Representatives included individuals from the local health department, the assistant superintendent of schools, the grant writer from the City of Waterbury, the legal counsel to the mayor, the chair of the board of education, the Bridge to Success director (Birth-to-21 Initiative) and the chairperson of the health department board. *“So we had a bunch of these stakeholders around the table and we were able to leverage this grant to also go after additional grants throughout the city, as well as local level, state level, and the federal level.”*

One example of a new grant opportunity that arose was described by the YMCA:

One of the things that came out of the CPPW project is that we were able to leverage a grant from the Waterbury Development Corporation. We put sidewalks around the new K-8 school and started a Safe Routes to School program. It's about feeling safe and getting parents to feel safe. And the reality is the crime statistics are the same as in the 1970s but media loves to speak of kids getting abducted – which is a terrible thing – but parents have that set in their mind that their kids aren't safe.

Ultimately, the Waterbury YMCA has found success in bringing stakeholders around the table and, subsequently, leveraging and combining resources to provide a range of programming that meets the needs of youth in the community.

Further, the Waterbury YMCA received a federal grant for \$500,000 to install more sidewalks and to do some campaigns around that same K-8 school. The ultimate goal is to increase the number of kids walking and biking to school. The Waterbury YMCA has also applied for a federal Safe Routes to School program, and plans on having five K-8 neighborhood schools that children can walk to in the intermediate future. Due to these efforts and the success of securing additional funds, the board of education agreed that as new K-8 schools come online in the next school year, they will continue to implement the Safe Routes to School program with those schools.

Another funding opportunity related to biking was obtained from the state of CT; the YMCA received some funds to do a biking program for kids. It was determined that kids often do not have access to bikes. When they do have access they often don't know the safety components – how to make signals, to wear a bike helmet and the like. The YMCA leveraged about \$11,000 to offer a program next year through the YMCA and the City of Waterbury to address these two needs.

A third opportunity was the receipt of an ACHIEVE grant through the United States triathlon association. The funds provided \$10,000 to implement an urban triathlon program, teaching youth to swim, bike, and run. Youth participate in a six-week summer program from 9-12 at the YMCA, and then participate in a youth triathlon at the YMCA camp. The Southbury Patch newspaper wrote an article on this program (<http://bit.ly/x2G8iR>).

Another success has been “sitting around the table with like [minded] individuals who care about youth, and who realize that coming around the table monthly for a goal, that we’re truly having an impact in the community.” The Waterbury YMCA suggested that other communities gather everyone around the table who is working with youth, including hospitals, the chamber of commerce, the police and fire departments, and non-profits. The YMCA thought that these organizations in the City of Waterbury, as a whole, have all realized that no one agency can do it alone.

Each agency needs to come to the table and put away their own agendas and realize at the end of the day it's for the kids. And because of that this CPPW grant and the other leverage grants, and because of our relationships, these opportunities have come to the city. And the city realizes we need as much youth programming as possible because we have 18,000 kids in the school system, and there needs to be things for them to do. And there is no need to fight for kids - let's not duplicate services, let's work together and decide who is best at what and make sure the kids have the resources to be as successful as possible. And continue on making sure collaboratives happen.

To make and sustain these collaboratives, the YMCA suggested that “you can’t be afraid.” They pick up the phone and make the necessary calls, as well as return calls in a timely fashion. They have developed strong relationships with agencies such as the Waterbury Police Department. “And those relationships need to be there, because you need each other. And unfortunately there are those out there that want to play in their own sandbox, but their sandbox is going to be washed away. The non-profits that are going to be successful are the ones who are collaborating.”

Bridgeport – One strategy that has worked for the Bridgeport YMCA to help foster partnership and engagement has been to: “be open about your motive and definitely when you talk about something make sure that you carry it out; people want to see the results of their work, the results of the meeting, so that you can keep them engaged. So that let’s say we’re working on a project, and it was supposed to take three months and now it’s six months or a year. Because people want to see success, they want to see something tangible. *So I think that being open and to show results in a short period of time so that you can keep them engaged and can continue to keep on reeling them in.*”

Sustainability without Consistent Funding is Difficult

The second lesson learned, mentioned by four YMCA-School partnerships, was that sustainability is difficult without consistent funding. While some YMCAs do not see the possibility for sustainability of their CPPW programming, others are actively trying to leverage funds and resources.

Danbury – The Danbury YMCA is “trying to build our resources so we can do more – we would do more but what limits us are resources.” The administrative time necessary for this project is not covered by the current funding, CPPW or otherwise. An asset to the program is the staff, and the fact that the administration is mission-driven, though balancing the administrative needs without adequate funding will continue to be a challenge in the future.

So one of the things I recognize is while the SCRAM program is a really good program, it is definitely reliant and can only be sustained with funding. So we're only going to be successful if we receive funding to do it. And with the ACHIEVE focus we really look at more policy and environmental – it looks at health at a different level. So yes we are removing a lot of barriers with what we are doing at Ellsworth School and now two more Title I schools. We are addressing barriers with target populations who need that support in order for their kids to be more active and have more active foods. So we are helping their environment, but that is limited to the amount of funding we have.

Southington – The Southington YMCA had concerns regarding sustainability of CPPW programming. YMCA staff stated: “We love the concept but will there be continued funding? Hopefully DPH finds this to be worthwhile to help support communities in this manner.” While the YMCA plans to continue proving memberships regardless of future CPPW, CT DPH, or like-funding, they feel they need to identify new funding sources to continue the other components of their program, as mentioned below:

If we were able to get more funding moving forward, again we will get more hands-on connection, get more of Jolene's time, and as well as I think we can get more kids involved. We did this in the summer, but it didn't work out for some kids in the summer for various reasons, so if we were able to do it during the school year we could really attract a lot more kids.

Branford - The Branford YMCA reported the one major roadblock to the continuation of their program is resources. Due to the amount of staffing and transportation that is necessary to implement the program, the YMCA is limited to serve no more than 30 students at a time in the “Smart Moves” program. “We had to cut off [the number of students] because of the amount of staffing, the number of nights we can do it, and then to pay for transportation to get enough kids over here from the school, because we provide transportation from the school to here.” If the YMCA had more resources they would be able to provide additional staffing and resources to offer the program to more youth, or to offer the program two days a week, instead of one.

While CPPW funds have primarily funded this program, there are plans in place to try and sustain programming with their partner school and a group of 30 youth. The goal, however, in the future, is to obtain additional funding in order to expand the program:

Right now the best resources for us would be if we just had additional funding so we could branch out and provide this for more students within the same school district. And then also provide this program to outlying, shoreline towns. And that would just increase our staffing cost, the cost for supplies, and our transportation.

An overall assessment of progress from the YMCA view is: “So I look at these as all little baby steps – I mean we've definitely seen some successes. But there are still a lot of steps in what needs to change.”

Waterbury - There is overlap between the Waterbury CPPW Local Policy Team and the City of Waterbury policy committee; the Executive Director of the YMCA sits on both committees, as do a few

other individuals that have been involved with the CPPW project. The CPPW Local Policy Team meets monthly, except in the summer. Their role is to implement the CPPW grant, reflect on and learn from it, and then to expand thinking to other grants as well. “This is going to be a sustainable committee – we are working on CPPW as well as the Safe Routes to School program. It’s sustainable because of the other work we are now doing.” *[and sustainable due to other funds being secured – as mentioned in previous sections of this report]*

Provide Flexible Programming (if it doesn’t work, change it up)

The third lesson learned, mentioned by three of the YMCAs, is to be flexible with the programming that is provided. Many of the YMCA mentioned being flexible with activities, but three YMCAs thought it was something that directly led to program successes. The Bridgeport YMCA-School Partnership is provided as an example.

Bridgeport – The Bridgeport YMCA thought that their diversity of offerings helped the program to retain students over time. The staff often switched up the program activities: “our staff is multi-skilled in what they can do because they can teach tennis, teach dance, do the obstacle course. Because the staff has different levels of expertise, we are able to switch up the activities to keep the children engaged.”

This engagement led to higher levels of retention, particularly in regard to the summer camp program. When the YMCA started the program, there were about 47 children and they were committed.

*Unless the students were sick they were here. And when they were here they were actively involved in the activities. **There is something for everyone – it wasn’t just basketball, it wasn’t just dance, it wasn’t just cooking – the mixture of what we offered I think it kept our numbers and it kept the children engaged.** We had a core group of children who were pre-teen, and to keep those children engaged you have to switch it up – you have to keep it interesting and keep it going. After 30 minutes you lose them. So you have to be able to give them the tangible what’s in it for them.*

Effective Communication is Important

The fourth lesson learned, mentioned by three of the YMCAs, was the importance of effective communication. Two examples are provided below.

Southington - The advice the Southington YMCA gave is to work on communication through all areas. “A few had a good feel for this when we started, but as we went on we realized we could have done a better job at communicating throughout the association. So develop a good plan but then be sure to communicate it as well.”

Waterbury – Strong, open communication has been established with the Supervisor of Health and Physical Education for the City of Waterbury, Joe Gorman. The Waterbury YMCA and Joe do a lot of collaborative work with the school; the goal is that individual youth receive 225 minutes of vigorous physical activity each week. The YMCA tries to align some program activities, such as the pool and the basketball courts, with student data the schools collect. The YMCA assists with part of the data sheets that kids complete for physical activities. For example, a student might report they practiced basketball at the YMCA on one day or went to the YMCA gym on another day.

We are very fortunate that we have that great relationship with the school system. The other thing we do – for our 21 Century grant programs in the City of Waterbury, we have eight sites that we provide staff to do PA with youth after school. So we are the ones running the different sports programs or activities at the school sites.

Create a Positive Association with the Program

The fifth lesson learned, as mentioned by three YMCAs, was the importance of creating a positive association with the program, as opposed to the program being perceived as only for kids who were overweight or out of shape. Examples of how the two YMCA approached establishing positive associations with the program are provided below.

Southington - Letters from the school guidance counselor, from the partner school, were sent to students who qualified for programming. “We wanted to be careful about not labeling these kids, so it went specifically to these kids and we didn’t broadcast it. If families chose, they came into the Y for an orientation one afternoon to learn about the program, and then we would sign them up at that time.”

Wallingford – The school system and the YMCA ensured that students did not develop a stigma surrounding the bus or the program – such as seeing it as a “fat camp bus.” According to the YMCA:

It’s a fitness program at the Y and everyone is invited. If you are fit and you want to participate in the program we’re not going to turn you away. Or we will create that stigma – oh, I didn’t qualify because I’m fit. We don’t turn anyone away. Further, we discussed how we could ensure this was not labeled as the fat kids’ bus, and the school system really helped us with that. If any [negative] comments came up it was definitely driven down.

At this point it is perceived as a “kind of a luxury item to be part of this program, versus it being detention or a punishment. It’s seen on a positive note.”

Planning Is a Key to Success

The sixth lesson learned, mentioned by three YMCAs, is the process of planning as a key to programmatic success. Two of the three YMCAs discussed this and synopses of these conversations are provided below.

Torrington - One of the major lessons learned within this partnership is related to planning. If the YMCA were to do this again, they stated they would have more lead time between promoting and implementing the program. The YMCA and school had promoted a start date, but implementation was delayed due to paperwork and other logistics.

Since it was new and we were trying to figure out everything that we were doing, everything was just jammed up in the beginning. Doing it again, we'd have a little bit of a better plan. So we knew what we wanted to do, but it was in flux because there were some details – a sign out sheet for parents and details and administrative stuff that we were realizing we needed to do. Like oh, we have to have the emergency contacts on the registration forms that every teacher has – it's something we do for our camps, but we'd never done something like this before, so it took a while.

Secondly, they noted that the YMCA and school might have advertised to fewer grades, since the program had such a high turnout of students who were interested in participating.

The YMCA had two pieces of advice for other YMCAs or schools who are considering a similar partnership. The first is regarding the planning timeline:

Definitely start early! Have conversations with the superintendent in March, knowing that it's not going to happen right away. It's not like a Y program, like hey, we're going to do this next week. So that you can fit it into whatever they have going on in the fall. It's a good time to plan it because in order for it to be successful it has to fit in to what they are doing, it can't compete with what the school is doing, then you are not going to get the support.

This YMCA found that with this approach they had time over the summer to really finalize the framework for programming.

Hartford – The Hartford YMCA reported that if they were to plan for this project again, they would “reverse engineer the project, to rethink how we recruited and to get more kids engaged somehow. And so we might have done something different there. And I’m not sure what the barriers there were or are, but we’d look at that to try to get higher numbers.”

One barrier identified for students is transportation, and the YMCA might look to partner with the city to get bus tokens for the students to address this barrier. Although the YMCA is on the bus line, some students may have had trouble getting bus fare to take the trip to the YMCA. Some bus tokens were provided to students by the director of the nursing academy, but additional conversations with the city may have led to additional bus tokens or another solution to this barrier.

Providing Transportation Reduces Barriers to Participation

The seventh lesson learned, discussed in detail by three of the YMCAs, was that transportation to programming can be a challenge for youth and can be a barrier to program implementation. While more than three YMCAs mentioned transportation as a challenge, the following three projects described this challenge in greater detail.

Milford – A major challenge was that the students at Platt Technical High School did not live in close proximity to the program. Since parents who did not live in Milford would likely not be able to pick up their child from a program that ended at 5:00 pm, transportation was a barrier for some students. “So what happened with us is that if the parents do not live close enough then the Platt Technical School Bus took them to the mall, and then they took public transportation home.” Additionally:

We discussed this a bit when we started putting this together with the school, but we didn't realize until after implementing how big of a barrier it was. Because those 200 kids that originally wanted to do it – when they went home and told their parents they could get a free membership, the parents would ask how they are going to get home. Because at the end of the school day there are buses that would take those kids back to their towns.

A solution to this problem had not yet been found. The original proposal was to offer programming during the school day, but that did not work for the school.

New Haven – A major obstacle, was transportation – “that was a huge obstacle and it started to fall apart. But I wouldn't let that happen, so once we figured out the transportation they were all on board.” The New Haven YMCA suggested that other YMCAs attempting to set up similar programs *work out transportation issues early in the planning process*. They stated that while this task can be time-consuming, it is something that is possible to work out with collaboration and persistence.

Southington – One of the barriers mentioned by the Southington YMCA is getting kids to the YMCA, since parents might be working or the family might not live in close proximity to the YMCA. “Right now we do have the opportunity to get the kids from the schools to the Y on a school bus, but there is still the barrier of getting the kids home. It's something we're looking at, and we don't have all of the resources yet, but we'll keep working on it.” *One thing the YMCA was able to build on was the existing transportation between the school and the YMCA*. For example, the high school swim team was already getting dropped off at the YMCA because that is the only indoor pool in Southington. Taking advantage of situations such as these may be helpful to programs.

Discussion

Eleven YMCAs in Connecticut, 46% of YMCAs statewide, partnered with one or more elementary, middle or high school partners to provide physical activity and nutrition programming to youth. Local Policy Teams comprised of YMCA and school staff and other community-based stakeholders were established or existing community policy and planning entities were leveraged to plan, implement and evaluate programming during the funding period.

During the 12-month period of program implementation, YMCA-School partner programs served almost 1,500 youth, the majority of whom were from families with low socio-economic status. This represents approximately 13% of students in all grade levels of the 16 partner schools and 24% of students at these schools that qualify for free or reduced lunch. On average, youth attended programming eight times per month, participating in an average of 15-19 hours of physical activity and nutrition programming per month.

In addition to accomplishments in program reach and attendance, YMCA partners noted the following successes: established or strengthened local partnerships; utilization of well-trained, engaged and trusted program staff; short-term improvements in youth attitudes, behaviors and self-esteem; increased family engagement; and provision of programming that was flexible and responsive to community needs and evaluative feedback.

YMCAs noted the following lessons learned during the funding period: it is critical to engage in planning from the outset of a project to address potential barriers to youth participation in programming, partnerships are essential to survival as is effective communication between partners, creating a positive association with the program is important to getting youth to participate in programming and providing flexible programming keeps youth engaged, providing transportation to programs reduces barriers to participation, and programming cannot be continued at the same level (as provided during the CPPW funding period) if additional funding sources are not leveraged before the end of the grant period.

YMCAs were able to work toward sustainable obesity prevention programming through: establishing new or strengthening existing partnerships with schools, establishing partnerships with local community policy and planning entities, making improvements to programming infrastructure, utilizing feedback and evaluation results, as well as increasing community awareness of the need for obesity prevention efforts. The most successful YMCA-School partnerships had a combination of strong community partners, clear planning, provided flexible programming based on community and evaluative feedback, employed well-trained, effective program staff and had leveraged additional funding sources. Additionally, Local Policy Teams that were in place prior to CPPW funding, and whose scope is broader than the CPPW project are most likely to continue collaborative efforts in the future and have the capacity to continue leveraging additional resources to continue physical activity and nutrition efforts. CPPW was a springboard for Local Policy Teams to be developed or supported. This encouraged all YMCAs and schools involved to think of innovative approaches to address the problem of physical

inactivity. Relatedly, partnerships that utilized multiple funding streams to provide programming, and were able to leverage additional funding streams before the end of grant period, are in a better position to sustain obesity prevention efforts.

Recommendations

Given the timeframe for programming and limitations in data collection, it is challenging to make recommendations regarding programming. However, available evidence suggests the following:

- For funding streams with short time frames, select grantees with established community collaborations, existing program infrastructure and that have additional sources of program funding.
- Outcome data collection (e.g. to gauge changes in behavior or physical activity) should be conducted in a standardized manner, using valid instruments across sites by trained data collectors (not program staff). Relatedly, if outcomes are not achievable or measureable within the funding period, utilize alternate sources of documentation of progress made toward outcomes.
- Produce a guide or other resource on best practices to foster sustainable programming for childhood obesity programs for use by organizations such as the YMCA, as well as their partners.

Appendix A: A CPPW Grantee Success Story

Program Activities, Successes, and Lessons Learned:

Wallingford Family YMCA & Dag Hammarskjold and Moran Middle School Partnership

The primary purpose of the following case study is to provide details of one successful YMCA-School partnership, so stakeholders, such as other YMCAs, can understand how the various pieces of program planning, staffing, leadership, and partnerships connect to achieve successful implementation of physical activity and nutrition programming. This case study addresses the successes of this YMCA-School partnership as well as the potential for sustainable policy, system, or environmental changes resulting from this partnership.



The selected case study program involved a partnership between the Wallingford Family YMCA and Moran and Dag Hammarskjold Middle Schools to implement the “Fit-To-Go Program.” The information provided in the following case study was collected from quarterly reports, an interview with the YMCA Executive Director, an interview with a guidance counselor at a middle school, and documents and data collected by YMCA staff on youth who participated in program activities. All sources of information are integrated, with a heavy emphasis on the YMCA interview, as this provided the majority of details regarding program activities, successes, and lessons learned.

Program Details

The Wallingford Family YMCA (Wallingford YMCA) implemented the *Fit-To-Go Program* in collaboration with two middle schools; this program focused on physical activity and nutrition, and was partially funded by Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) funds awarded by the Connecticut Department of Health (CT DPH) in 2010. The goal of the CPPW grant was to increase access to physical fitness for middle school youth by partnering with one or more schools. To this end, the Wallingford YMCA partnered with two schools, Dag Hammarskjold and Moran Middle Schools, to increase youth access to the “Fit-to-Go Program,” a 12-week program where students visit the YMCA twice a week after school (2:30pm until 5:30-6:00 pm) and, upon graduation from the program, are provided with a free three-month YMCA membership. To date, the program has been very successful in recruiting and engaging students. At the time this case study was written, there were plans to try to extend the program beyond the CPPW timeline (beyond December 2011).

The following narrative will provide answers to these questions, in order:

- *What motivated the Wallingford YMCA to participate in the CPPW initiative?*
- *What motivated the schools to participate?*
- *What do youth experience through participating in the Fit to Go Program?*
- *How were students recruited into the program?*
- *What helps foster the YMCA-School partnership?*
- *What were some program successes?*
- *What were some key lessons learned?*

What motivated the Wallingford YMCA to participate in the CPPW Initiative?

A healthy lifestyle focus for the YMCA began a number of years ago, sparked by their 2008 strategic plan, one of the goals of which was for the Wallingford YMCA to become a leader in promoting healthy lifestyles in the greater Wallingford area. Since 2009, when the YMCA started implementing the strategic plan, there has been a resolute focus on growing and developing health and wellness programs for the community. The offerings focused on middle school fitness, such as swim lessons and youth sports.

This community was a 2009 recipient of a Connecticut Statewide Pioneering Healthier Communities (PHC) Initiative grant. The goal was to convene local leaders and develop a team, the focus of which would be to help fight childhood obesity. This team, named *Activate Wallingford*, includes partners such as the city mayor, the superintendent of schools, the department of parks and recreation, YMCA board members, and “most” town leaders.

Activities conducted under the PHC initiative led the Wallingford YMCA to apply for a CPPW grant through CT DPH. While the Fit-to-Go Program has other funding sources, CPPW funds have helped facilitate access for youth to the YMCA and the Fit-to-Go Program. The YMCA decided to not only use funds to provide free memberships to youth, but also offer youth free access to the 12-week Fit-to-Go

Program, two times a week. They also provide youth with access to personal trainers, a nutritionist and the opportunity to create and eat healthy snacks.

What motivated the schools to participate?

A guidance counselor at one of the partnering middle schools explained that one reason the school was interested in partnering with the Wallingford YMCA was because it presented the opportunity for students to have access to afterschool programming. While the school had previously been able to provide afterschool programming, budget cuts eliminated this type of programming several years prior to the CPPW initiative. Additionally, the school reported that the partnership with the Wallingford YMCA was feasible, since the YMCA provided most of the necessary leadership, prepared the paperwork, and generally made it not burdensome for the school to participate in this partnership. In turn, the main role of the school was to help identify students for the program.

What do youth experience through participating in the Fit-to-Go Program?

School-Year Program

In late 2009 and early 2010, the Wallingford YMCA began to implement the Fit-To-Go Program, which became partially funded through CPPW funds in 2011. As part of this program, youth are brought to the YMCA for a 12-week program focused on physical activity and nutrition. The YMCA partners with the Wallingford Department of Youth and Social Services (youth and social services), which provide the use of vans (in-kind), so that participants from the two middle schools can be transported to the YMCA. Once at the YMCA, the youth are brought to an off-site location where they meet with a nutritionist and program leaders. The students make and eat a healthy snack and are able to take home recipes.

The students are split up by gender⁹, and then one of the groups is brought into the fitness center, where a couple of personal trainers get the youth acclimated with the equipment, whether it be the cardio (e.g., treadmills, elliptical) or the pin /strength equipment. The youth then complete logs to track their personal activity. Once they are done with this activity, the youth either go to the YMCA gym, the pool, or outside if it's nice, and work in a group setting to take part in physical activities such as dodge ball, water polo, or flag football. Afterward the youth come together to discuss what they learned, whether they had fun, etc. Parents pick up their children between 5:30 pm and 6:00 pm.

The YMCA staff also takes participating youth on field trips, to “break it up a little bit.” The field trips are all activity-based – the YMCA staff brings the youth to different locations and organize “a kind of special event for the youth.” Past events have included laser tag and climbing walls.

⁹ Splitting up the groups by gender was a decision that was made after reflecting on early implementation of the program. The YMCA staff learned that, generally, the females did not enjoy the same activities as the males. So, while the males might be more interested in bench pressing, the females might be more interested in something like a Zumba class. The YMCA staff worked with each group of youth to determine which activities would be offered.

Near the end of the 12-week program, right before “graduation,” there is a family night. The youth take part in their typical program from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm (slightly abbreviated) and then parents are invited to attend. In one of the program rooms a nutritious dinner is provided, such as turkey chili, and families can take home the recipe. The nutritionist and the fitness staff talk about the program and facilitate discussion on what the kids learned about healthy activities and healthy eating.

Sean Doherty, Executive Director of the Wallingford YMCA, shared his observations about a family night that had occurred in November 2011:

What’s really cool is I was able to observe last night and they would do a show of hands – what have you learned from the program so far? And how have you changed your eating habits and everything. And a bunch of kids would raise their hands and say things like I have a salad for a snack now and I don’t put dressing on it! Or that they are coming back to the Y tonight.

And if you saw the demographics of the kids – they are about 80% either overweight or obese. The other percentage is probably inactive. They may look in shape but they are not really in shape. They may spend a lot of time in front of a screen, whatever that screen may be –a phone or a computer screen or whatever.

Parent participation in these family nights has been high, and it has created a “ripple effect.” The parents begin talking about choosing healthier foods because their kids are asking for these foods. Additionally, according to Sean:

*“That’s the **ultimate goal is to have some learning on a family basis, because it is not the kids that are going grocery shopping, it’s the parents.** So we can do whatever we can from 2:30 to 6, but the parents have to take it from there. And if they have buy-in and we can also help educate them as much as possible – and that gets at sustainability a bit as well if the parents buy-in.”*

Finally, the graduation ceremony is the capstone at the end of the 12-week program, and students receive a diploma, some promotional items, and a free three-month membership to the YMCA¹⁰. This membership is a surprise to the students and the intent is to encourage students to continue with and sustain new habits they have learned in the program. A number of individuals are invited to the ceremony, including the YMCA Board of Directors, the School Superintendent, and the Director of Social Services for Youth.

¹⁰ After the first 12-week program, the YMCA observed that the kids weren’t using the membership because their families did not have free memberships so this often meant that they did not have access to transportation to the YMCA. Due to this barrier, the YMCA decided to extend the membership to the family unit as well and this appears to have helped get whole families to work out at the YMCA.

The total project cost of the Fit-to-Go Program is roughly \$50-60,000, which includes staffing, transportation, food, oversight, materials, and 3-month YMCA memberships. The program is typically conducted twice a year – once in the fall and once in the spring, and a modified Fit-To-Go Summer Camp program was newly added this past summer.

Summer Camp

Due to the success of the Fit-To-Go Program and the relationship that has been established with the schools, the Wallingford YMCA received requests to offer programming during the summer months to students. Based on this demand, the YMCA decided to implement a Fit-to-Go Program Summer Camp between May and October, something that had not been done before CPPW funding.

One modification that was made for the summer camp was to include more outdoor activities. The main focus of outdoor activities involved using a 14-element low ropes course. The YMCA was able to use this 75-acre course as a result of a partnership between the YMCA, City of Wallingford Parks and Recreation Department, the local Board of Education, and the Rotary Club.

The YMCA reported that the summer camp was a success. Although the program did not use much advertising, there were 10-12 kids who participated—a similar number of participants as take part in each 12-week school-year program.

How were students recruited into the program?

The Wallingford YMCA partners closely with administration and teachers from the Moran and Dag Middle Schools to identify and encourage students to participate in the Fit-to-Go Program. The YMCA attended meetings of key school personnel (principal, guidance counselor, and physical education teachers) to ask that they help recruit youth who were not typically physically active. For example, they could identify students that are not active in gym class or that might struggle with certain physical activities, or they could identify students that were involved in after school programs that typically involved more sedentary activities. The goal was to get not only overweight youth, but any youth who appear to be inactive. The second criterion communicated by the YMCA was that the youth had to show interest in participating in the program¹¹.

This school-personnel-based recruitment strategy has typically resulted in a list of about 12-15 student names being sent to the YMCA within a week of when they are asked to recruit for each Fit-to-Go Program session. It is interesting to note that the ethnicity of students in the program typically mirrors

¹¹ Youth that are interested in participating are required to complete a parent sign-off form as well as a commitment letter. This letter clarifies that the program is free and tries to impress upon the student/family the importance of consistent attendance. The letter also states that if attendance is not consistent, another youth may take their place in the program. This is used as a form of accountability with the parents and kids.

the changing demographics of the City of Wallingford where the Hispanic population has grown significantly within the past 10 years.

According to the YMCA, the school partnership is essential, as the YMCA staff would not know how to “drive home a recruitment plan” without the partnership of the school. Once the youth are identified and are placed into the program, the YMCA stays in touch with the youth and their families through a variety of methods (e.g. newsletters).

Referrals of youth into the program have also come from non-school sources such as youth and social services, the YMCAs’ nutritionist, and the United Way. The YMCA reported there has never been a shortage of participants to the program.

According to the YMCA Executive Director:

Everyone in town knows this program now. And everyone in the school system knows about it as well. They know about it through our partnerships and through word of mouth. Recently, a parochial school asked to see if we would branch out and work with them as well.

What helps foster the YMCA-School partnership?

While the partnership between the school and the YMCA is not new (the YMCA currently serves approximately 400 children daily in before- and after-school programs), the Fit-To-Go Program has helped expand this partnership. Weekly contact is maintained between the YMCA and the school, through email, telephone conversations, and in-person meetings. There is also the newsletter, which is good for the parents as well as the school personnel.

Another key element that helped to foster the relationship between the YMCA and the school was the implementation of pre- and post-tests on various physical activity skill-sets (e.g. stretching and reaching, mile run, pushups, sit-ups) by staff at the YMCA. These skills are similar to what is worked on and tested by the physical education teachers at the schools. As a result of the Fit-to-Go program, some of these kids are now passing their school physical education tests. As stated by the YMCA Executive Director:

“we’ve seen kids go from not being able to do one push-up to doing 20. Some of these kids weren’t ever taught to do a push up or challenged to do a pushup – and now it’s part of our routine on a weekly basis. And we’ll give homework and say do some pushups and sit-ups in your spare time, it takes three minutes.”

Detailed Case Example: Changes in Fitness Scores

Results from the girl's YMCA fitness tests are provided below. The pretest was conducted on May 4, 2011 and the post-test was conducted on June 15, 2011. There were four individuals who did not have results from both points in time and are not included in the following table. While there were a number of improvements, it is notable that cardiovascular activities were reported to be a focus of the program, and the times for the mile run/walk decreased by a minute or more for five of the six students (that had times recorded at both the pre and the post-test). Further, push-ups, which were not a major focus of the program activities, but were a weak area for the participating students at pre-test, increased for the majority of the participating youth.

Participant	Pre / Post			
	Mile run or walk	Sit-ups	Push-ups	Sit and Reach
1	17:00/14:45	20/29	0/1	18.5"/21.5"
2	16:39/ na	17/28	0/1	17"/18"
3	11:54/injured	24/29	0	19"/22.5"
4	17:49/15:41	26/32	2/3	20"/23.5"
5	19:28/17:53	2/0	0/1	11"/21.5"
6	na/13:39	18/20	2/7	20"/21"
7	16:42/0	24/30	0/3	20"/22.5"
8	12:02/11:33	15/22	0/4	22"/23"
9	14:45/0	18/17	0/0	16"/21.5"
10	14:49/11:52	18/28	0/2	18.5"/20"
11	18.55/17:53	19/28	0/2	14"/23"
<u>Avg. Change</u>	<u>-1.56 min. decrease</u>	<u>+ 7 increase</u>	<u>+ 3 increase</u>	<u>+3.8" increase</u>

What were some program successes?

The Executive Director of the Wallingford YMCA was asked about program successes. The following is a digest of his responses, organized by theme. Additional success stories are also available in the *Case Study Appendix* provided at the end of the Wallingford YMCA-School Partnership case study.

Health Department Engagement

The partnership and support of the Connecticut Department of Health (CT DPH) has been tremendous. YMCA staff has appreciated site visits by CT DPH staff because, as the Executive Director said, “I could talk to you for hours about the program, but seeing it in action – I don’t do it justice as far as the success of the program.”

Partnerships—“It takes a village”

Second, success of this program is attributed to “a trifecta – the partnerships, the planning and the staff.” According to the Executive Director, “It can’t be one, it’s got to be all. It definitely takes a village. And the referral basis – if we can’t get the referrals then the program doesn’t work. So the referrals are an integral part of the program, and the trust and buy-in from the trust factor from the school system and from the town is huge. If we didn’t have the kids, we couldn’t run the program.”

Self-Evaluation and Program Improvement

Third, keeping the standards high for the program is a key element to success. The program staff conducts surveys and periodically reflects on how they can continue to improve the program. Further, they are willing to constantly change the program, as necessary: “If we see something that doesn’t work, we will switch it up a bit.”

Establishing Trust

Fourth, it was noted that the establishment of trust is essential to form and foster partnerships and relationships.

Establishing trust takes a long time. I am on many boards around town and so I’m engaged and I think that goes a long way as far as the community interaction. Same thing with our director of healthy lifestyles and a lot of our staff are involved in committees around town. So they see us everywhere. And we provide financial assistance to basically whoever qualifies for that. And if you don’t qualify for it we will find a way to get you Y services in one way, shape, or form.

New Friendships Forged

Participating youth form new friendships. Because of transportation challenges and scheduling, the YMCA combines the two middle schools (Moran and Dag). According to the YMCA, “it’s like the Boston

Red Sox and the Yankees are now on the same team.” Since many of these kids are not involved in an afterschool activity, such as a sports team, where they would meet youth from the other middle school, this is likely the first opportunity they have to form these new relationships.

Emergence of Peer Mentors

Finally, the YMCA has also had Fit-To-Go graduates return to the program as peer mentors to new, incoming students. These peer mentors will not only refer kids to the program, but they can also participate again for another 12 weeks and help another youth who is less committed or who is unsure of the program. The peer-to-peer mentoring provides a type of support that complements the support that the adult staff provides.

Expansion of Programming & Facilities

The Wallingford YMCA is planning future activities and programming related to healthy lifestyles more broadly. In addition to continuing the Fit-To-Go program, as funds are found and obtained, this YMCA is also looking to expand facilities to a west side location.

What were some key lessons learned?

Set Up Clear Channels of Communication

This YMCA reported that setting up a good communication system is a huge factor. The YMCA communicates with parents, youth, the school system, and the other partners. Open lines of communication are established so “if someone is unhappy for any reason, we will know. And we won’t take it personally. Whatever the case may be, we will take the feedback... and we keep an eye on the kids as well and know what is working and what is not working.”

Keep Programming Flexible

The Fit-to-Go Program has been flexible with the programming it has provided. While there are daily and weekly plans, the program staff is willing to tweak or change activities on the fly if an activity is not working. Staff try to “keep it pretty fresh” for the kids by consistently evaluating whether activities are engaging the youth.

Students’ Perception of the Program are Important (maintain a positive brand image)

Finally, a huge reported success for this YMCA has been attendance, which is at least partially related to the positive associations that were created around the program. With nearly 100% student attendance, the YMCA attributed this partially to the fact that the youth want to and choose to get on the Fit-To-Go bus. They are not being forced by parents, teachers, or any other individual. Further, the school system and the YMCA ensured that students did not develop a stigma surrounding the bus or the program – such as seeing it as a “fat camp bus.” According to the YMCA:

It's a fitness program at the Y, and everyone is invited. If you are fit and you want to participate in the program we're not going to turn you away. Or we will create that stigma – oh, I didn't qualify because I'm fit. We don't turn anyone away. Further, we discussed how we could ensure this was not labeled as the fat kids' bus, and the school system really helped us with that. If any comments came up it was definitely driven down...it is kind of a luxury item to be part of this program, versus it being detention or a punishment. It's seen on a positive note.

Families are Important in Keeping Youth Engaged

After the first 12-week program, the YMCA identified a barrier to continued youth engagement—if parents can't afford memberships for themselves, then youth may not be able to get to the YMCA to continue engaging in physical activity. Due to this barrier, the YMCA decided to extend the free membership given to the youth to the family unit as well. Now, the YMCA reports, “the family is working out as well – so that's kind of been a home run there. We don't have 100% of the families coming in and working out on their own yet, but that is a goal.”

What challenges remain?

One of the biggest struggles for the program is funding, especially with budget cuts that have occurred in 2011. While interest in the health of the community is the same for all partners (YMCA, schools, and town officials), the biggest obstacle reported was continued funding, “how to bring a change of policy, change of behavior, change of environment into play without tying it into funding, cost. And if there is that initial funding or support, what happens after that?” While the YMCA continues to look for other resources to continue programming similar to the Fit-To-Go program, it takes “a great deal” of resources to continually look for additional support. It was noted that if there is a way to continue federal funding, possibly through Michelle Obama's *Let's Move* work or other initiatives and/or to continue communicating with the Connecticut Department of Public Health that this type of support would be of interest to the YMCA and key to providing some of the continued programming.

Participant Success Story: Morgan, age 13, female (Wallingford YMCA Fit-to-Go Program)

The following is an individual program success story as relayed by a school guidance counselor regarding one particular Wallingford YMCA Fit-to-Go Program participant.

Background

Morgan is thirteen. She was recommended for the [Fit-to-Go] program to address poor eating habits and low frequency of physical activity. Her weight identifies her as morbidly obese.

Changes and Evidence

Morgan is often seen giggling and smiling playing games like capture the flag and knock out. Her peers and we counselors have even discovered that she is talented in basketball, after she won two consecutive games of knock out. Morgan is enthusiastic about physical fitness. She inquires when we will be using the fitness center. She enjoys walking on the treadmill and after a little encouragement challenges herself by sprinting, now without asking her.

Morgan has a better understanding of her eating habits. Rather than restricting enjoyable foods from her diet because they are “unhealthy” she understands it is better to enjoy them, but in moderation.

*The greatest improvement for Morgan goes beyond the knowledge of nutrition and fitness; it is her sense of self. **As opposed to identifying herself with a group of overweight peers sharing a goal to lose weight** (which would reinforce her definition of self as overweight or “fat”), **Morgan now identifies her ‘self’ with a group of girls who share a common goal; to have fun and be healthy.** The bottom line, a new Morgan has emerged from the program. Old Morgan might describe herself as overweight, new Morgan might see Morgan as... ‘Morgan is being healthy’ or ‘Morgan is good at basketball.’*

*Morgan specifically benefits from the program because **it creates an environment where she is free from judgment allowing her to feel comfortable enough to engage in physical activity.***

Recommendations

*For other children to benefit from a program like Fit-to-Go, **creating a comfortable environment and bond between the peers in the group is crucial.** Particular to female groups, “clicks” will form. Also, when the group is composed of girls of different weights and body type, negative attitudes about each other’s behavior or appearance are inevitable, but will not be tolerated [in the program]. Consistency in directing students on subjects like weight and physical ability is very important. **Any conflict or comment about being “fat” or being “weird” are moments to be addressed and discussed sensitively** so that the offender and offended are understanding of others and their idiosyncrasies.*

*One tool is utilizing funds or times that are dedicated to field trips or special event to **talk about body image.** For example, instead of going on an outing, we had a spa day at our facility. This was the perfect*

opportunity to talk about “girl stuff”. I created a discussion about the Sociology of Beauty. The goal is to address body image and realize America’s unrealistic idea of beauty. We ran through topics like the American history of female body weight and how it is equated with beauty, specifically how it was not always about being “skinny”. Also, I used pictures of different cultures across the world to illustrate different concepts of beauty.

I would recommend to others to address body image in a discussion. The most effective exercise, is as simple as asking a question to the group of girls (or even boys). The facilitator would ask, “Close your eyes, Picture yourself-sitting on a bench in the park, you’re watching the people walk by, and who do you see?” Let the group think, next question, “How about at the Mall, what do the people look like that pass you by?” Then, by using a couple ads in magazines that show pictures of women, i.e. perfume, clothing and make-up. Picture by picture, ask the group “did any of them look like this?” as they reply ‘no,’ continue with the next ad, “How about this?” when they reply ‘no’ again, and repeat with the remaining ads. After, guide a discussion about American culture and pressures on women to be beautiful (topics include: airbrushing in ads, mention Americans are bombarded by about 3,000 advertisements within one day, what are the motives of advertisement and cost the average women spends on her appearance opposed to men or other cultures).

Overall, I found this tool to be very helpful in creating a bond between the girls and I received some positive feedback in the way they understood the material.

Thanks

Programs like Fit-to-Go are extremely important for the social and emotional development of at risk preteens. The ability to offer this program leaves children, such as Morgan, with a positive self-awareness.

Additional Success “Snap-Shots” — YMCA Fit-to-Go / School Partnership

The YMCA provided some additional examples of program-related successes. These cases are summarized below.

Engaging a new, growing community

The Hispanic community in Wallingford is a very tight-knit group. We were trying, unsuccessfully, to promote and get more YMCA members from the Hispanic community and we weren’t getting good feedback. So we found out one of the things they did at the Spanish community center is they had a Zumba class – but the instructor just knew only a little bit about Zumba and wasn’t certified or anything. And so what we did is provide an in-kind donation to them and lent to them a certified instructor on a weekly basis. The instructor would go in and teach a class and developed relationships with the participants. I think we are still doing it, but we have enough participants now that they’ve come over to the Y. We came to them, versus they came to us. And I think that was a huge success – [while] that is

non-CPPW related, we recently had a similar experience with a child who was Hispanic in the Fit-To-Go program, turning him around and then having him refer people to the program, that has been a success as well.

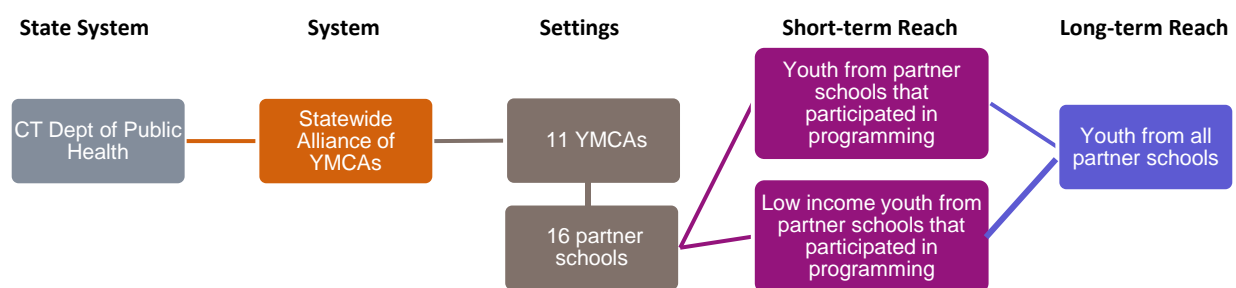
Peer-to-Peer Mentoring

The peer mentor program was pretty cool. There was this one kid in the program who hated the program. He did not want to come into the program in the first place. On the first day, a big grump on his face and sitting in the corner, that sort of thing. By the end of the program, he became the highest performer. He then became a peer mentor the next year and was referring kids. He is also Hispanic and he has also referred kids to the program.

Appendix B: Program Reach

The project was implemented in 11 of Connecticut's 24 YMCAs and partnered with 16 schools. A total of 1,425 students participated, 74% of which qualified for free or reduced lunch.

Estimating the project's short- and long-term reach are key output measures for the CDC CPPW projects. All funded CPPW projects are instructed to present reach using a standard calculation and format. The figure below displays the systems, settings, and short- and long-term reach of the CT YMCA-School Partnership CPPW Project.



Units per setting implemented

11 YMCAs / 24 YMCAs statewide = 46%

There are 24 YMCAs in Connecticut's alliance of YMCAs. This project worked with 11 (46%) of those YMCAs. The 11 YMCAs each partnered with one or more schools in Connecticut to implement their CPPW programming. In total, the 11 YMCAs partnered with 16 schools. The project worked with these schools because they were identified as those that served students from families with lower socioeconomic status. According to 2010 data from the Connecticut State Department of Education, at 9 of these schools, 50% or more of enrolled students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Estimated short-term reach

1,425 participating students / 11,050 students at targeted grade levels of 16 partnering schools = 13%

Based on school enrollment data, the project had the potential to reach a total of 11,050 students at the targeted grade levels of each partnering school. The project reached 1,425 students (regardless of free or reduced lunch qualification) for a short-term reach of 13%.

1,058 participating students who qualify for free or reduced lunch / 5,969 students who qualify for free or reduced lunch at 16 partnering schools = 24%

Based on 2010 data from the Connecticut State Department of Education, the project had the potential to reach approximately 5,969 students who qualify for free or reduced lunch at each partnering school. The project reached 1,058 students who qualify for free or reduced lunch for a short-term reach of 24%.

These data also show that 74% (1,058/1,425) of participating students qualified for free or reduced lunch. To this end, the majority of students served by these YMCA-School partnerships were from families with lower socio-economic status.

Estimated long-term reach

1,425 targeted students / 11,995 students at all grade levels at 16 partnering schools = 12%

It is unknown if projects intend to maintain or increase the number of students served after the funding period. Based on 2009 data from the Connecticut State Department of Education, the project has the potential to reach an estimated 11,995 students (12%) if implemented in all grade levels at the 16 partnering schools. If it continues to target 1,425 students, the project has an estimated long-term reach of 12%.

Appendix C: Staffing Outputs—CPPW Funded & In-Kind

Ten of the individual projects used CPPW funds to partially fund staff to implement the program. The majority of YMCAs also provided in-kind contributions via their own staff or from partners or other volunteers. The program staffing outputs were gathered from the information reported in the YMCA quarterly reports, and is summarized in the table below. The level of detail provided varied greatly between YMCA; sometimes positions were indicated by “position 1” or “position 2,” and other times position titles were indicated (e.g., “health and wellness director”). Therefore, the level of detail provided in the table varies according to the detail that was provided by each YMCA.

Staff Outputs—Funded & In-Kind by YMCA-School Partnership

Community	Grades	Staff Type		Ave staff hours/month	
		Funded	In-Kind	Funded	In-Kind
Branford	5, 6	Health and Wellness Director, personal trainer	n/a	46	n/a
Bridgeport	K – 8	2 positions	2 positions	48	8
Danbury	1 – 3	2 Instructors + Y Staff	Director, MPH RD consult, Youth Instructor, Fitness specialist, CHK Volunteers, WCSU volunteers	58	47
Hartford	10 – 12	Personal trainer	Health/wellness director; Executive Director	12	5
Milford	9 – 12	Wellness Center Trainer, Health and Wellness Director, Senior Program Director	Platt Tech Social Worker	44	5
New Haven	5 – 8	2 teachers from partner school, Y lifeguard	City of New Haven bus, Y lifeguard	35	12
Plainville	5 – 8	2 staff positions	2 staff positions	60	60
Southington	6 – 8	2 staff positions	2 staff positions	90	60
Torrington	2 – 5	6 areas of gym - gyms, pool, lifeguard, locker room staff	n/a	17.25	n/a
Wallingford	6 – 8	2 youth coaches, 1 dietician, 1 personal trainer	3 fitness instructors	126	10
Waterbury	6 – 8	n/a	2 supervisors	0	47
Average				48.75 hrs/mo.	23.09 hrs/mo.

Appendix D: CT DPH Quarterly Report Template

Quarterly Summary: ☐ 1st (1/1/11-3/31/11) ☐ 2nd (4/1/11-6/30/11) ☐ 3rd (7/1/11-9/30/11) ☐ 4th (10/1/11-12/31/11)

YMCA completing this form:

Branford	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hartford	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plainville	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wallingford	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bridgeport	<input type="checkbox"/>	Milford	<input type="checkbox"/>	Southington	<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterbury	<input type="checkbox"/>
Danbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	New Haven	<input type="checkbox"/>	Torrington	<input type="checkbox"/>	Willington	<input type="checkbox"/>

School Name:

Grade(s):

Start Date of CPPW work with school:

- How many students participated in this physical activity program during this quarter? _____
- Of the number in question 1, how many were new participants during this quarter? _____
- Of the number in question 1, how many students met the free and reduced lunch criteria? _____
- On average, how many times per month did a student participate in this program? _____
- Dates and hours Program held.
Date(s): _____ Hours: _____
- Staff hours dedicated to this program including funded, volunteer, in-kind and/or interns for this quarter.

Funded: Position 1	Hours per month
Position 2	Hours per month
In-kind: Position 1	Hours per month
Position 2	Hours per month

7. Summary of activities for this quarter:

Please provide any success stories or anecdotes that you or your staff have observed or heard.

What feedback has you or your staff received from students participating in this program?

What challenges or barriers have you or your staff encountered?

What opportunities for improvement or lessons learned can you identify or describe here?

Please describe any progress that has been made toward sustaining this program past February 2012.

Optional: If you have any additional comments, materials developed, or related press/media coverage, please attach them here.

Appendix E: PDA Interview Protocol for YMCA Interviews

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking the time to talk with us today. Your input will be extremely valuable in forming a better understanding of what was most successful about the Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) YMCA Partnership project, as well as what could be improved in future projects.

We would like this call to be conversational. We have reviewed the quarterly reports you have submitted, and so we understand a little bit about your planned activities. However, please assume we are completely new to your project activities! Today, we would like to go deeper into what you have actually implemented, and what has been most and least successful so far.

To ensure we capture the details of this call, we would like to record this conversation to use as we put together the logic model. We will keep this recording confidential. Would recording this conversation be okay with you?

[If they say “yes,” GREAT! If not, take notes☺]. Great, let’s get started.

SURVEY CONTENT AREAS

INITIAL CAPACITY:

1. What was your motivation to participate in this project (money, technical assistance, other)?
2. How do the CPPW activities fit into other focus areas at your YMCA? What is unique? What is supplementing other programs? How much attention has this project typically received?
3. What resources were leveraged to implement this program?
 - People
 - Equipment
 - Other programs
 - Partnerships (going from “we” to “us,” involving others in the community, other groups and organizations)

GRANT-RELATED ACTIVITIES: DESCRIPTION + SUCCESSES AND BARRIERS

4. What *students were targeted* for participation in this project?
 - What methods were used to recruit targeted students?
 - Was there a change in strategy over time? If so, why?
 - Who actually participated – both targeted and non-targeted students
 - To what extent was recruitment successful? How do you know?

5. What was the rationale for *selecting the* [select one: *activities or existing program*]?
 - Probes: Was this selected because it was accessible? Resources were available? It was thought to be a good match for the targeted students? Other?
6. The next questions focus on the ***implemented practices*** you may have used to support implementation of the CPPW activities.
 - To what extent are a variety of activities available?
 - What is done to promote a safe, positive emotional climate?
 - What is the total enrollment? What is the staff-to-child ratio?
 - Is there adequate space to conduct the activities?
 - What is done to maintain continuity with regular school day? What communications, if any, occur between the YMCA and the school?
 - Successes & Barriers To date, what has been most successful? What has been least successful?
7. Okay, let's discuss contacts with ***community members***. To what extent have community members, such as family, or volunteers been involved with the CPPW program activities? Have there been collaborations with other community-based organizations and facilities?
 - Successes & Barriers – What did and did not work?
8. What has been the role of the ***Policy Team***? What purpose(s) does this team serve?
 - How were Policy Team member recruited?
 - What has been the nature of participation – frequent? Infrequent? Variable?
 - Successes & Barriers – What did and did not work?

LESSONS LEARNED:

9. What advice would you give another YMCA starting a similar program?

OVERALL SUCCESS STORIES:

10. Overall, what has been most successful?
11. Is there anything else we should know that we have not already discussed?

Ask whether any of the following documents are available; if so, ask for a copy:

- Letters, feedback from kids, parents, staff, schools, partners, and registration forms, etc.
- Any forms that highlight the promotion of the programs and any related pictures with parental consent.

Thank you!